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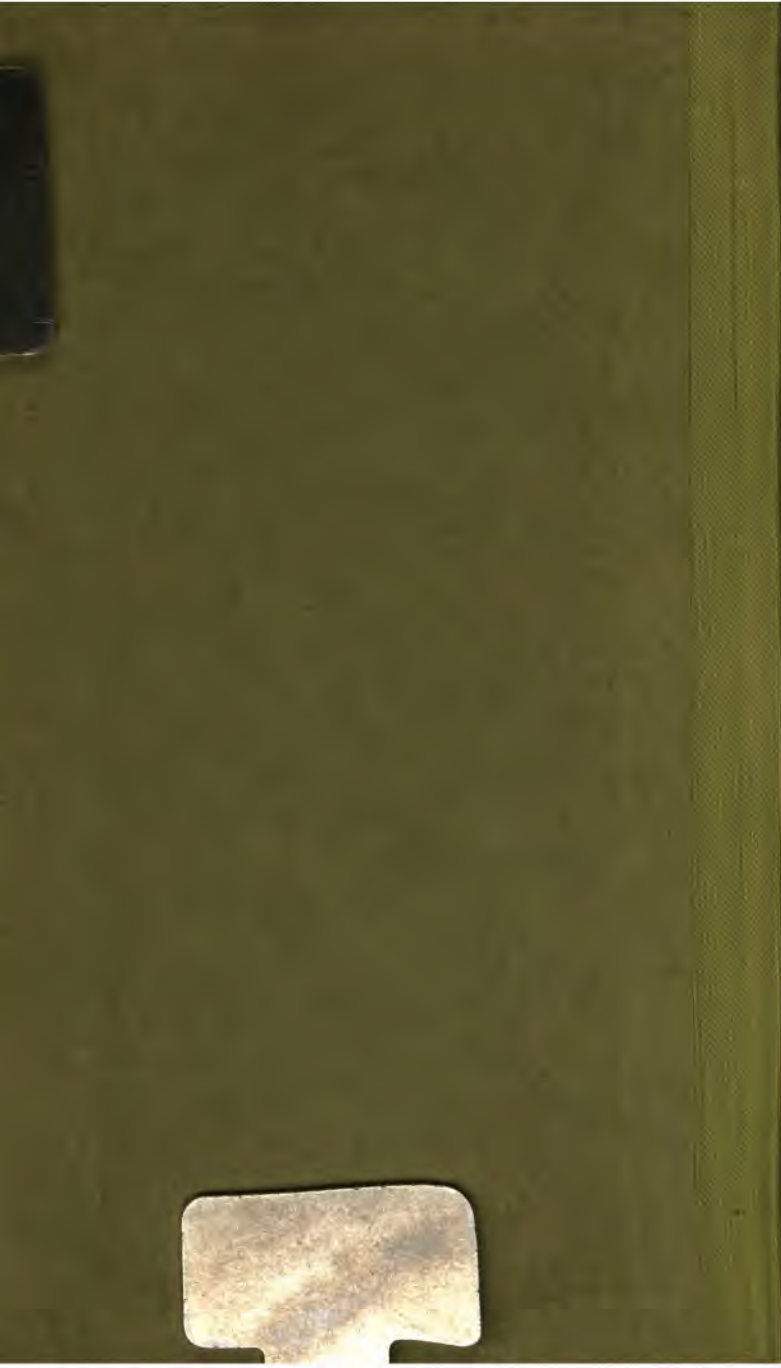
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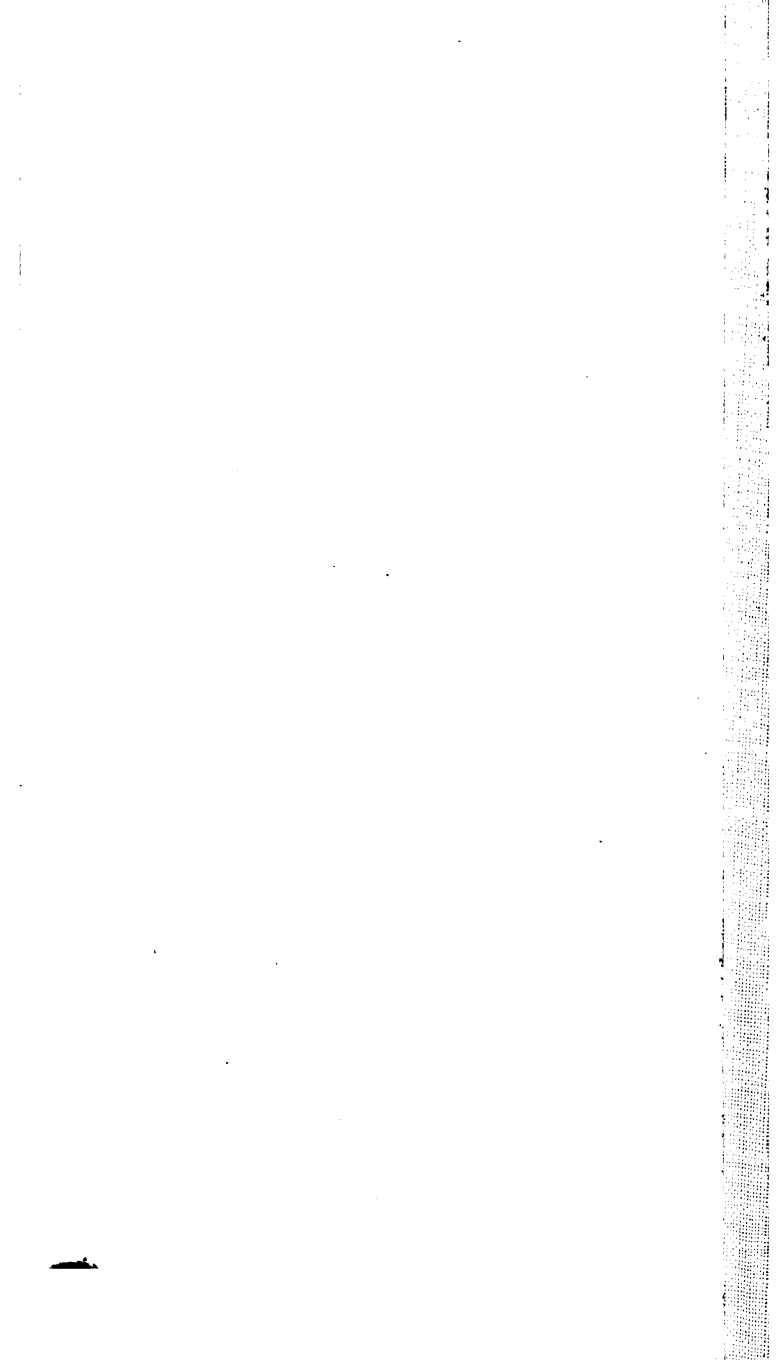
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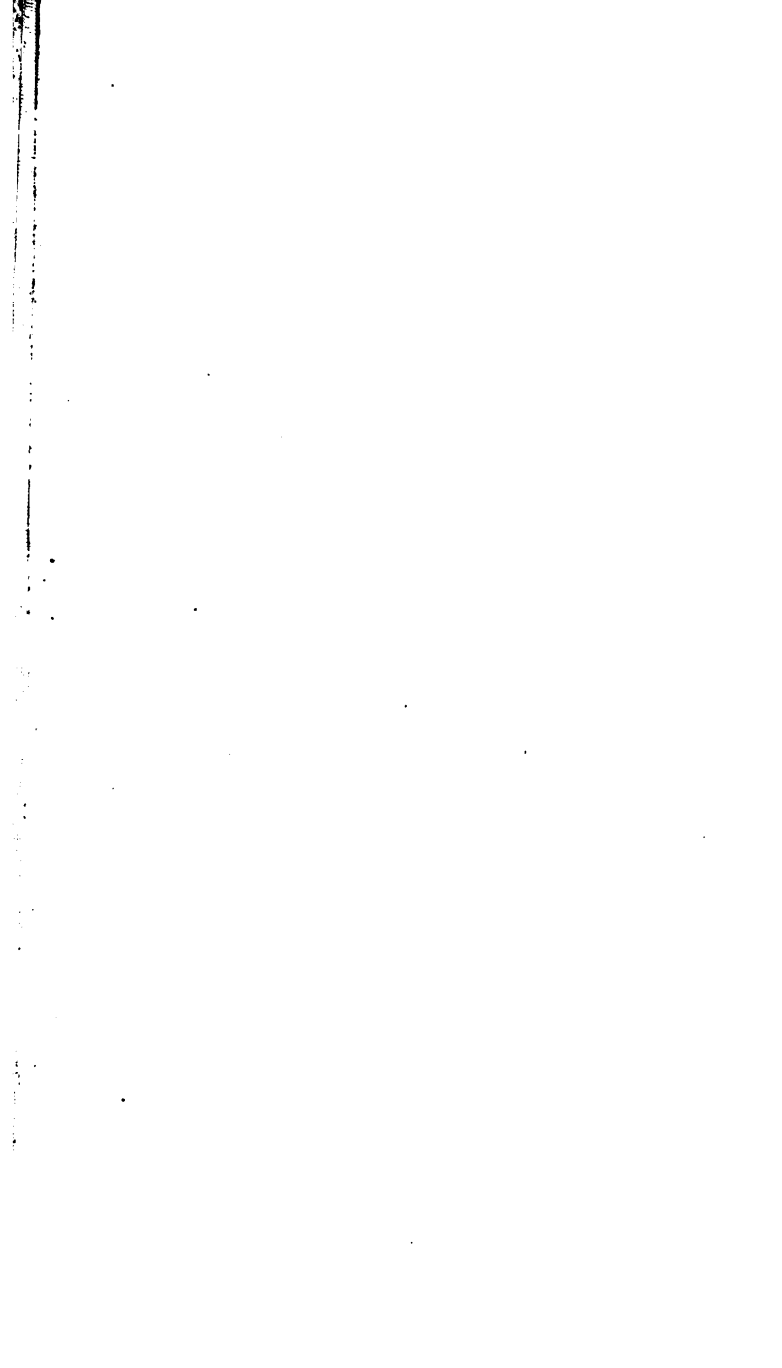
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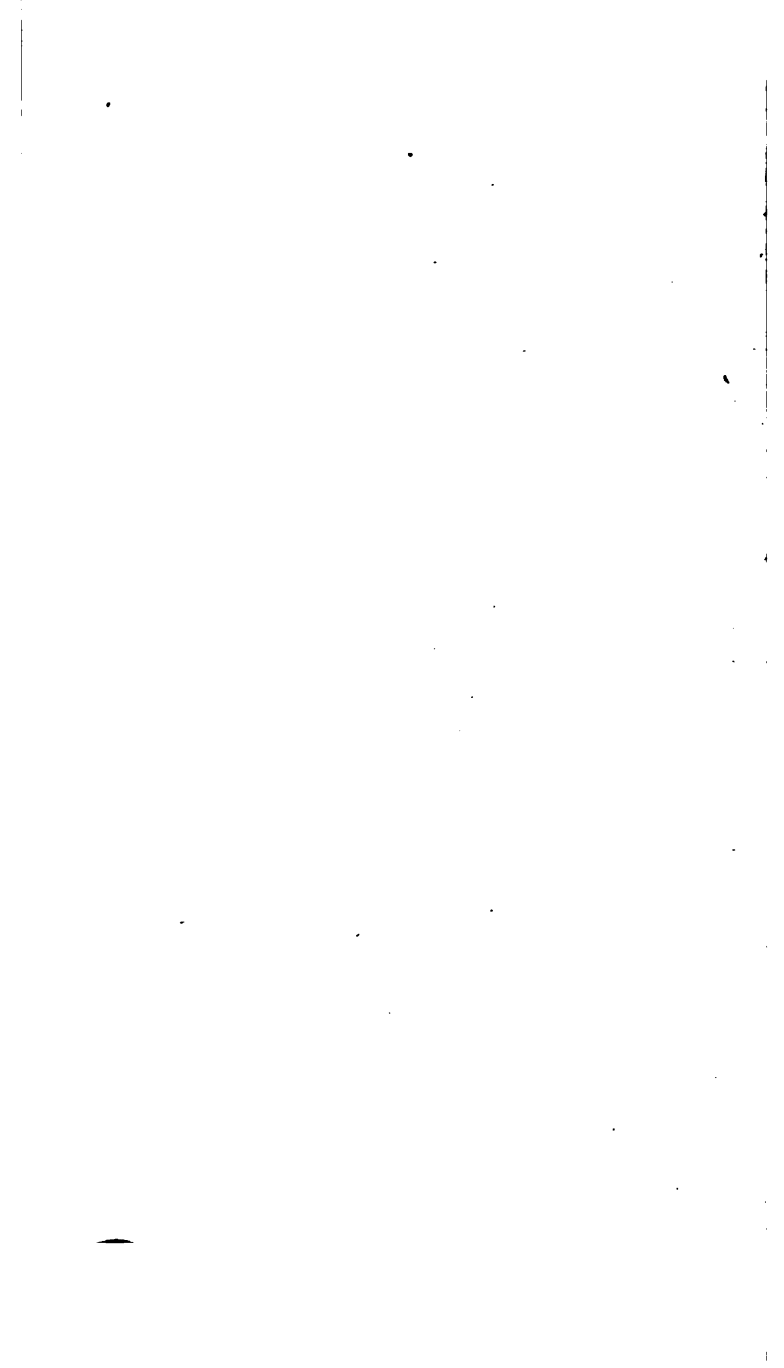
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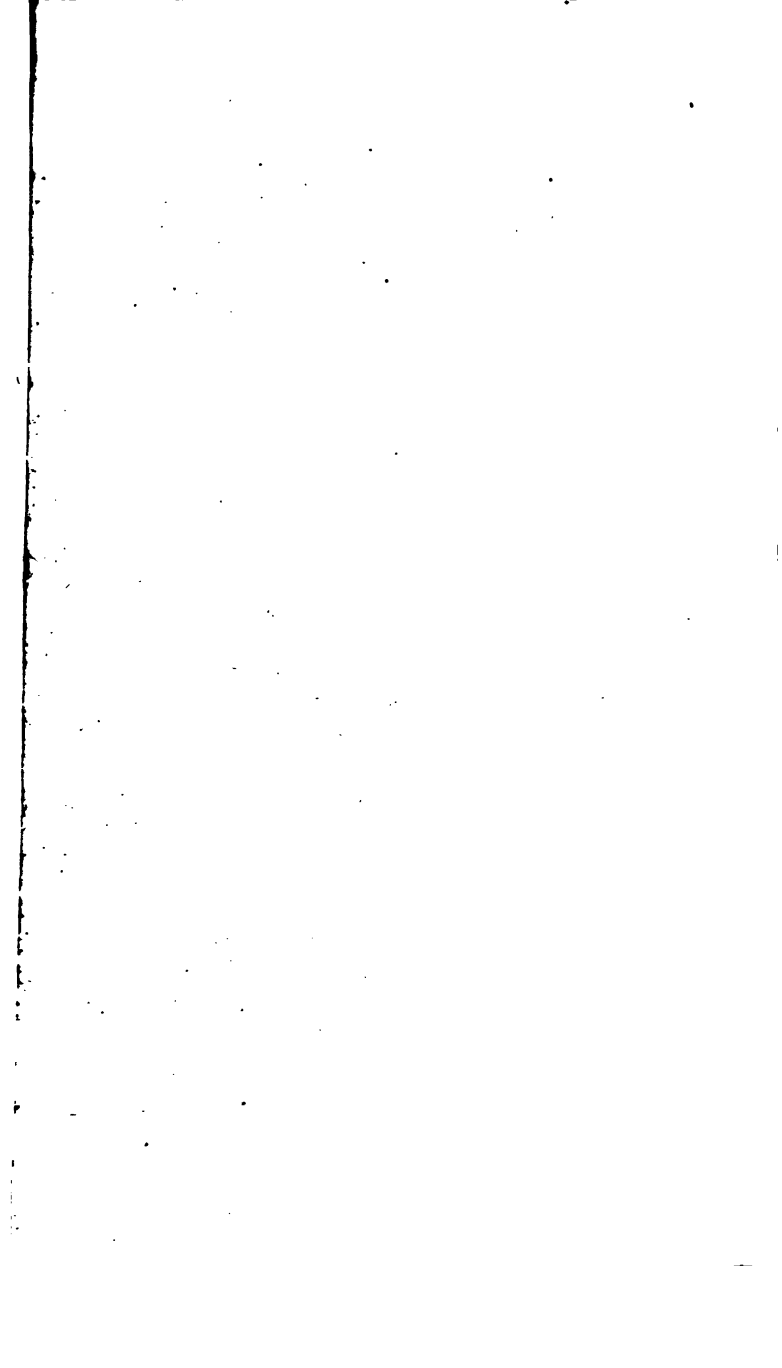
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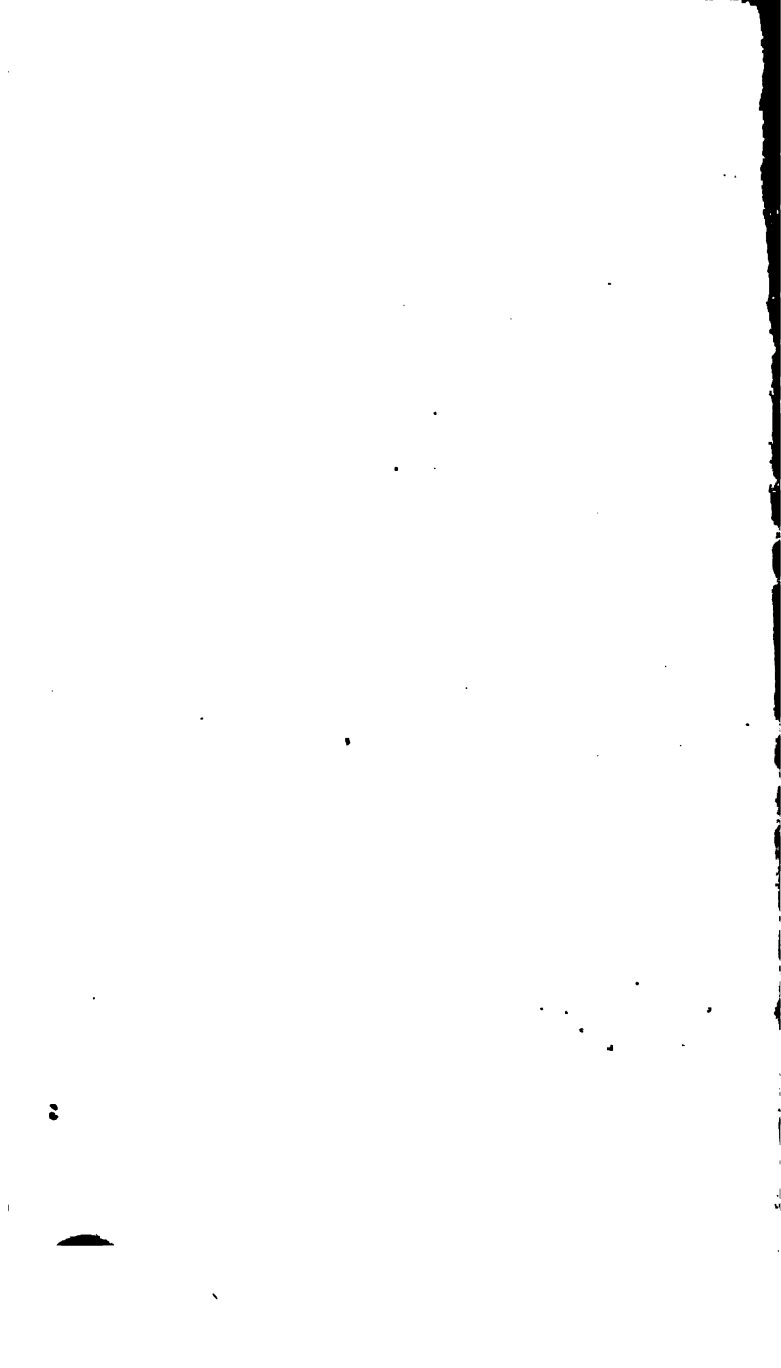


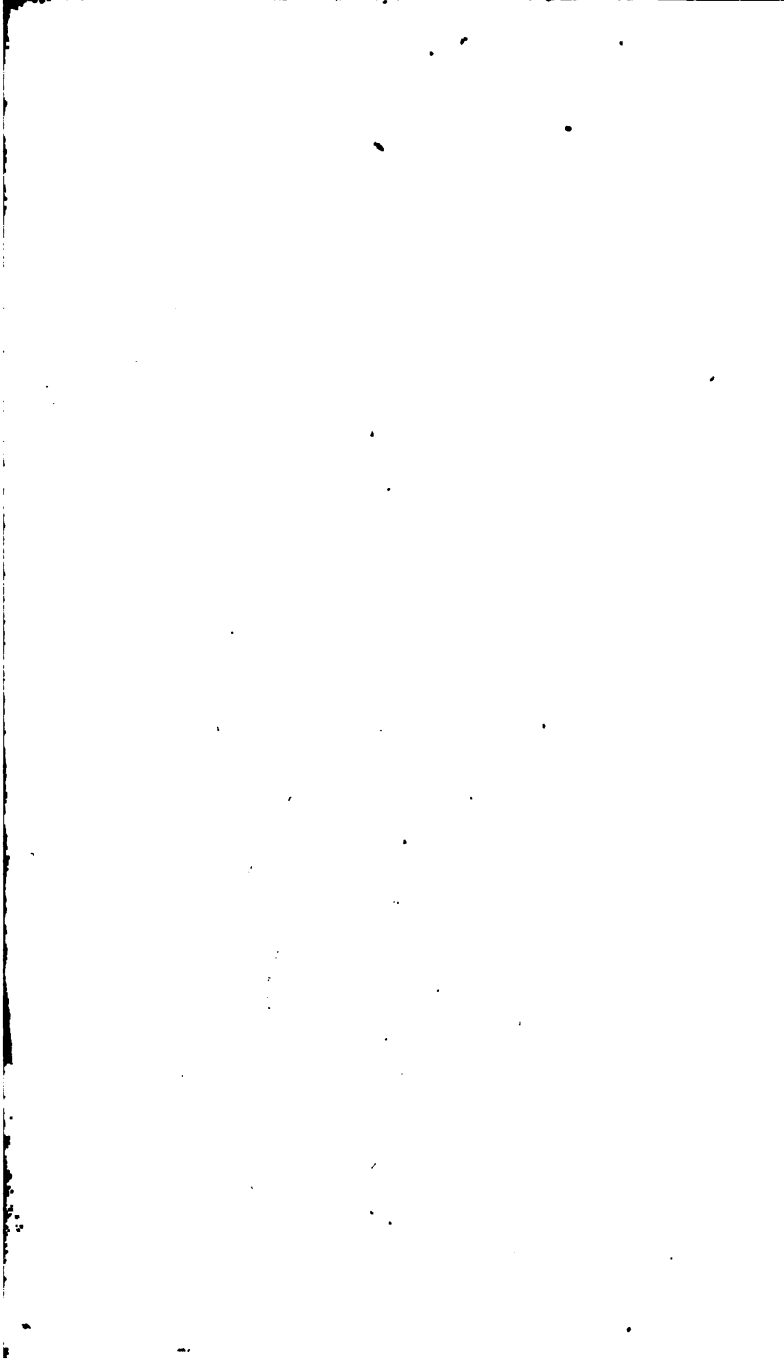


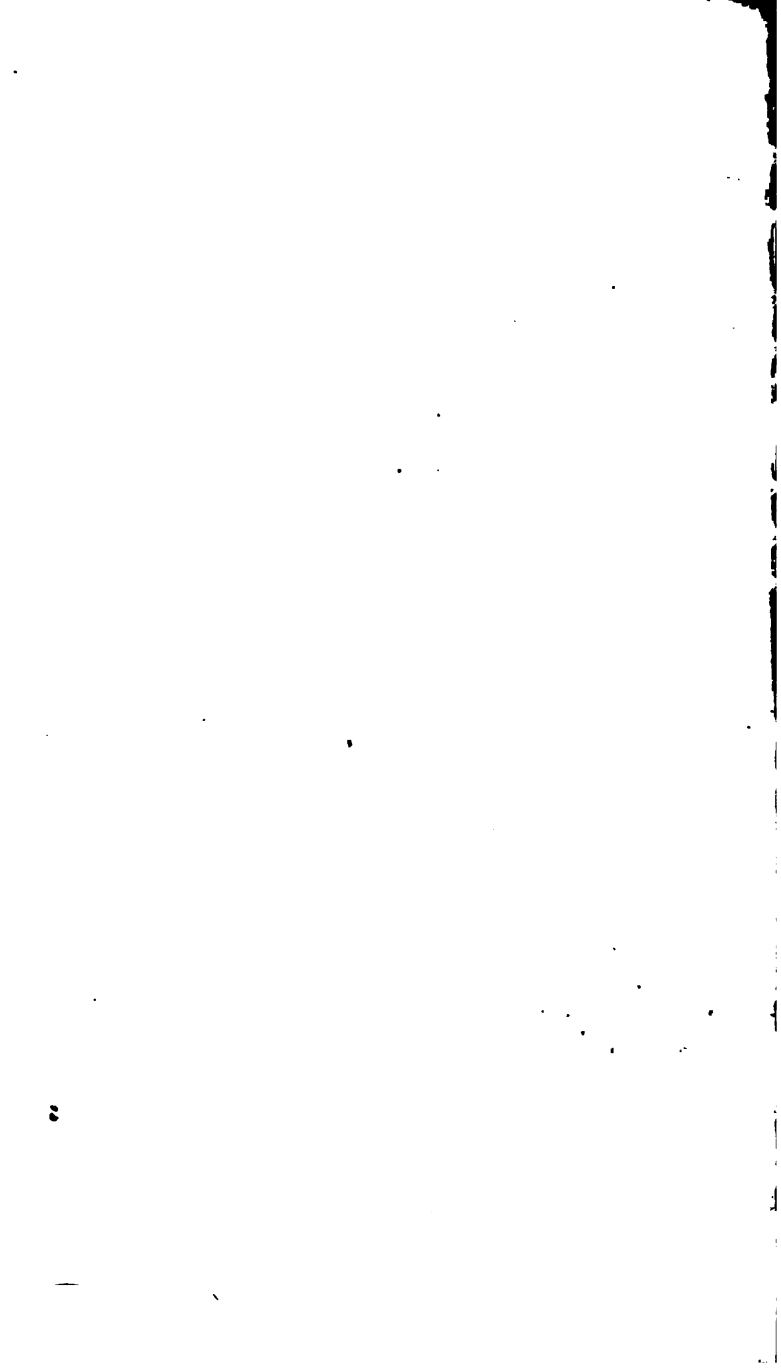


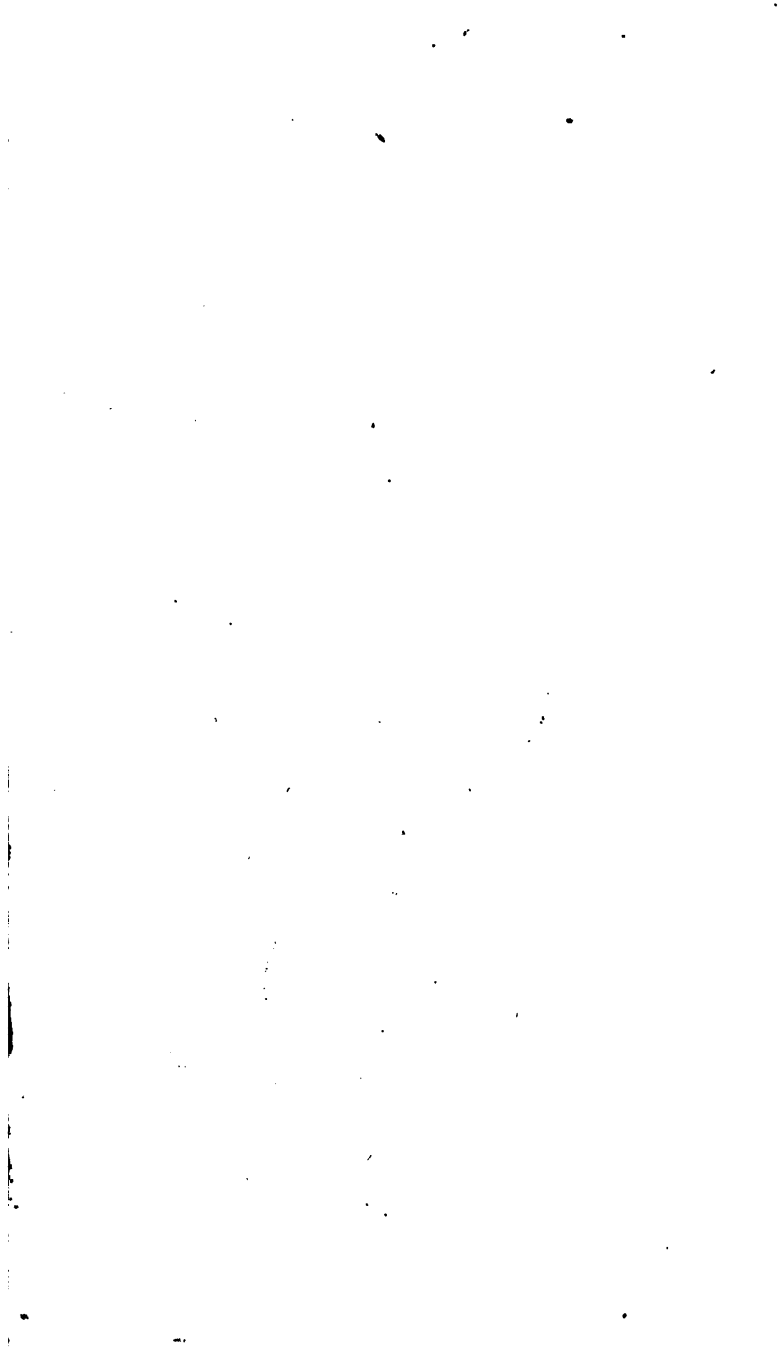














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THE

# LIFE AND REMAINS

OF THE

REV. ROB'T. HOUSMAN, A.B.

THE FOUNDER, AND FOR ABOVE FORTY YEARS THE INCUMBENT  
MINISTER OF ST. ANNE'S, LANCASTER; AND FORMERLY  
CURATE TO REV. T. ROBINSON, M.A., OF LEICESTER.

BY

76

ROB'T. FLETCHER HOUSMAN, ESQ.

SLIGHTLY ABRIDGED.

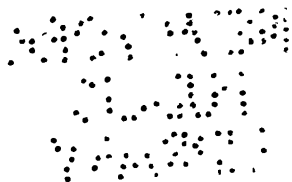
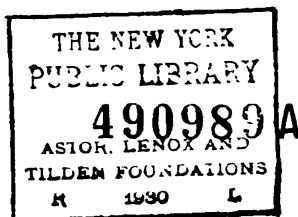
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## P R E F A C E .

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THE following pages contain a somewhat extended Memoir of the life and opinions of one, to whose faithful and long-protracted ministry of the Gospel of the grace of God, unusually abundant measures of divine favour were awarded. They possess but little of what is popularly understood by the word *incident* ; nor is it necessary, to a fulfilment of the proper end of biography, that they should possess more. The *real* object of biography, as distinguished from general history, is to enlarge our acquaintance with specific modifications of our common nature, by laying before us, with as much minuteness and fidelity as may be, the inner movements, the essential principles, the whole moral progress, and the whole moral portraiture, of an individual mind. In comparison with this

object, and if separated from it, mere facts and events, however startling or attractive, shrink into utter and absolute insignificance. Facts and events have nothing but a relative importance. They are important only in proportion as they tell upon the invisible and deathless being within us ; in proportion as they tend to create or consolidate habits, to mould and establish character, and to put upon it the final seal of its eternal destiny. How awfully momentous, when the delusive mists of time are dissipated, may the *smallest* occurrences be discovered to have been !—how perfectly trivial and how transitory the dominion of the *greatest* ?

SOME ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
LIFE OF THE REV. ROBERT HOUSMAN.

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THE REV. ROBERT HOUSMAN was born at Skerton, near Lancaster, on the 25th of February, 1759, in the house in which these lines are written; the property having belonged to his father's family for above three centuries. He was educated at the Free Grammar School in Lancaster, under the tuition of the Rev. James Watson; and about the age of fourteen was bound apprentice to Mr. Barrow, a surgeon, who afterwards obtained a Scotch diploma, and practised as a Physician. The pursuit of surgery being, however, on many accounts extremely offensive to him, Mr. Housman, previous to the expiration of his apprenticeship, abandoned the idea of entering the medical profession—directed his attention to the Church—and with a view to prepare for the labours of the University, again placed himself under the able tuition of Mr. Watson, with whom he remained until his departure for Cambridge. During this period of his life he produced several pieces of poetry, which were collected into a manuscript volume, now the property of his nephew, the Rev. William Higgin, A. M.,

Rector of Roscrea, and Vicar-General of the Diocese of Killaloe. These poems display considerable elegance of mind, and might perhaps justify a persuasion that "the vision and the faculty divine" were his. The taste which thus exhibited itself in the season of youth, was occasionally indulged, for the gratification of particular friends, in later years.

What the circumstances were which startled him from a gay and careless mode of life—or whether, as is probable, the transition was effected by insensible degrees—I have not been able to learn; but it was during a solitary walk near Halton, on the western banks of the river Lune, one fine Good Friday, that the idea of consecrating his life and energies to the office of the Ministry, first seriously entered the mind of this eminent servant of Jesus Christ. For some time he continued pacing slowly to and fro, considering and re-considering his design; at length, retiring to one of the small and pleasant woods which beautify that most beautiful district of the vicinity of Lancaster, he threw himself on his knees upon the grass—and there, with no eye to see him but the omniscient eye that never sleepeth, implored God to bless his pious resolutions, and to fit him for the work he had determined to do. The undertaking thus begun, was continued and ended in the same spirit of self-dedication and trust. Prayer, with which he *commenced* his long and active career of goodness, was the all-prevailing means of his subsequent success.

His parents, especially his father, resolutely opposed the project; he as resolutely entertained it. At length, his second sister stepped in to mediate,

and happily succeeded in adjusting the difference. Both his parents lived to hear him preach, to derive comfort from his ministrations, and to rejoice that their objections had been overruled.

Upon leaving Mr. Watson he repaired to Cambridge, having been entered of St. John's as a Sizer, on the 17th of March, 1780. From Cambridge, whither he went in the following October, he addressed his parents in a long letter, containing a circumstantial account of his pilgrimage from Skerton. Of this letter, which has been carefully preserved, I am enabled to present a copy. A journey of above two hundred miles, particularly to a young man bent upon economizing, was no light undertaking sixty years ago ;—the reader must remember this, when the minuteness of the subjoined details, and the undue importance attached to them, are soliciting a smile.

“CAMBRIDGE, ST. JOHN'S, October 12th, 1780.

“HONOURED PARENTS,—On Tuesday afternoon about three o'clock I arrived here, after a variety of methods of conveyance. I wrote from Buxton in such a hurry that I think the scrawl will be scarcely legible. I will therefore give you a journal of my motions since my departure from Skerton. I was attended out of Lancaster by Messrs. Clarkson, Barrow, Bell, and Hargreaves. The two latter left us at the fifth mile-stone; the others proceeded with me to Garstang, where we had a comfortable dish of coffee. I parted with them a little after nine o'clock, when I went on to Preston. I there got a snack, baited my horse, and steered my course for West Houghton, where I arrived before five o'clock. Mr. Chisenhale gave me a most

welcome reception. I there inquired whether or no Mrs. Lawson was at Bolton : I was informed she was not ; and the next day not proving fine, Mr. Chisenhale advised me not to go to Sharples, but to rest myself and horse. I followed his advice ; and on Saturday morning about seven o'clock set forward again. I did not stop at Manchester, but proceeded directly for Stockport, where I dined. I was then overtaken by Mr. Satterthwaite, with whom I went on to Buxton, having stopped about an hour and a half at Disley. At Buxton I made inquiry about the coach ; when, to my surprise and satisfaction, I was informed that one set forward from thence on Sunday. I could not then take a place, as the passengers from Manchester always have the preference. The coach arrived at Buxton about ten o'clock on Sunday morning, quite full. As the day was very fine I mounted the top of the coach to Derby, which place we reached about four o'clock. We dined ; and night coming on, and there being then a vacancy in the coach, I took an inside seat to Harborough. We got to Leicester at ten o'clock, where we supped, and got to bed a little after eleven. I believe it would have been much better had we never gone to bed, for we were roused before three. Being called up at that early hour, I was rather squeamish when I entered the coach, which continued all the way to Harborough, where we arrived at six in the morning. I there went to bed, and slept soundly four hours, which quite recruited me. I then followed Mr. Hutton's directions, and inquired if I could get a horse from thence to Cambridge. I was informed I could not. As it is a



bye-road, no Post goes that way; and the Leicester Carrier would be a week upon the road. There were now only three expedients; one was, to take post-horses, which were very expensive, it being eightpence a mile travelling that way since the additional duty; the other was, to go to London on the outside, and from thence to Cambridge in the same manner, which would have cost a guinea; and the other was—walking, and taking the advantage of incidents. I therefore set forward on foot, about half-past eleven. I had not gone three miles before I overtook a boy on horseback. I offered him sixpence to let me ride his horse to Kettering, which was eight miles further. He readily accepted my proposal. I set forward from Kettering about two o'clock, and walked thirteen miles in about four hours. I got a snug bed at a country inn, from whence I proceeded to Huntingdon at seven o'clock in the morning; I reached Huntingdon, which was thirteen miles distant at eleven o'clock. I stayed there about an hour; and as I was, contrary to my expectations, scarcely any fatigued, and only sixteen miles from Cambridge, I thought I could perform it with ease. I had walked about five miles when I was overtaken by a gentleman in a single horse chair. He very politely asked me to get into his chair, which I did, and rode a few miles, as far as his road lay towards Cambridge. I was immediately after this overtaken by a returned post-chaise; I bargained with the post-boy for a passage, and I entered this town in state. Having got my hair dressed, and being in tolerable trim, I went directly to Mr. Pearce, who received me very kindly. He asked me to

breakfast with him the next morning, and then put me into my rooms. I cannot yet give you an exact account of what expenses I shall be at; but after the first quarter I think it will be very reasonable, by following a plan of economy. I however can't think I shall want any money this some time, though I have deposited £10 in my Tutor's hands. One advantage has attended my coming up exactly at this time. I have spared a good deal of money in getting a second-hand gown and surplice. A gown (when new) costs £4. 10s. 0d. I have got a very good one for 10s. The cost of a surplice is £1. 10s. 0d. I have got one, bands and all, for 16s. Mr. Pearce has very obligingly made me a present of a cap, which would have cost me 10s. 6d. My expenses in coming from Skerton to Cambridge are £2. 1s. 0d. When I write again I shall be able to give you a more exact account of every particular. At the quarter end I will send down the bills for your inspection. In the meanwhile I shall by my conduct endeavour to deserve that affection which I have always largely experienced, and which will ever fill, with love and duty towards his parents, the mind of

ROBERT HOUSMAN."

On Sunday the 14th of October, 1781, not much more than a year after his arrival at Cambridge, he was admitted to Deacon's Orders, at a general ordination at Bishopthorpe, by Markham, Archbishop of York; and became curate to the Rev. Mr. Croft, Vicar of Gargrave, in Yorkshire. Mr. Croft, who had been a private pupil of Garrick's, with a view to the theatrical profession, was

justly esteemed one of the finest readers in England; and it is to the advantages enjoyed by Mr. Housman during his residence at Gargrave, that the excellence of *his own* mode of reading, and the well-known propriety of his pulpit manner, may be in part at least referred. "In these respects," the editor of the *Christian Guardian* observes, "he was pre-eminent." They who remember what the late venerable pastor of St. Anne's was twenty or thirty years ago, or indeed at a much more recent period, (for, though manifestly impaired, his voice and strength were equal to considerable exertion, until within a short time of his retirement from the Incumbency) will bear ready testimony to the finished beauty of his performance of the established services of the Church of England, and to the chaste and peculiarly impressive delivery of his ministerial addresses. Whatever advantages he might *fail* to obtain at Gargrave, it was certainly at Gargrave that he became skilled in the very important art of elocution.\*

The state of his mind when he contracted the unspeakably solemn responsibilities of his sacred office, was the state of thousands. He mistook decency for devotion, and a scrupulous avoidance of overt acts of evil for vital Christianity. He was, in fact, though perfectly conscientious, and, if tested by the world's standards, unexceptionably moral, totally unacquainted with the design, the character, and the power of the Gospel, as well as with the

\* "The importance of enunciation and delivery," says Mr. Simon, (see *Christian Observer* for January, 1837,) "is not at all appreciated as it ought to be. Pride and ignorance keep almost all, whether ministers or students, awfully in the dark on this subject."

full extent and spirituality of the Law. "How little," he said to me in 1837, "did I know, either of myself or others—how little of the nature of sin, or the nature of holiness—when I entered the church ! I had always felt an earnest wish to lead a life of freedom from sin—an earnest wish to be what is called *good* ; and I vainly fancied that the engagements of the ministry would afford not only ample facilities but adequate securities for the accomplishment of my desires. What deplorable ignorance ! I knew nothing of the human heart. I had to learn that the root of sin lies *there* : and that unless *that* be changed, which it never can be except by the renewing energies of the Holy Ghost, the best situation is worthless. There is, depend upon it, only one safe and suitable situation for all of us—THE FOOT OF THE CROSS. Of the Cross I knew nothing but the name."—In 1830 he had made a kindred statement ; the statement is notoriously consistent with a most reputable performance of the greater and the lesser duties of life. "I lived," he says, "through many a guilty year, as ignorant of the true character of the Saviour, as the beasts that perish ; and as devoid of any right affection towards him, as Satan himself. But *patience* reigned, and the curse did not come upon me. And *grace* has reigned ; and I believe, on the evidence of feelings that cannot betray me, that *now* the very first desire of my soul habitually is this—to perceive, by a realizing faith, the Saviour's glory, to find his presence near, and to taste that he is gracious. What an *advantage* it is when young people seek the Lord *early*."

From Gargrave (but *when* I am unable to say) Mr. Housman returned to Cambridge, where he re-

ceived Priest's orders from the hands of Hinchcliffe, Bishop of Peterborough, on the 26th of October, 1783, and in the immediate neighbourhood of which place he held a small curacy. During this his second residence at Cambridge, he contracted a very close and permanent intimacy with the Rev. Charles Simeon, by whom he was introduced to a highly respectable family of Independent Dissenters, of the name of Audley, one of the members of which, a young, beautiful, well educated, and pious woman, became, in the beginning of 1785, his wife. By this marriage Mr. Housman had one son, whose birth the mother did not survive many weeks. She was mercifully spared the endurance of much and poignant sorrow; but she had a spirit and a faith that would have sustained her under the severest shocks.

Of Mrs. Housman's brother, Mr. John Audley, an interesting and instructive memoir appeared in the *Congregational Magazine* for August, 1827. He was a man of respectable talents, profound piety, diffusive benevolence, and untiring activity in the service of Jesus Christ; and in the year 1790, having for several previous years occasionally dispensed the word of God in Cambridge and the adjacent villages, he received the sanction of the church, with which he was connected, for exercising his gifts in the public ministry of the Gospel. At what places, or to what extent, he was at first engaged in doing so, cannot now be ascertained, nor is it distinctly known whether he ever proposed settling as the stated pastor of any society; though I think I have heard, from the lips of one who knew and respected him, that he only contemplated officiating as oppor-

tunities might arise requiring his assistance. Between Mr. Audley and Mrs. Housman the warmest attachment subsisted; her death impressed him powerfully; and in a diary which has been preserved, bearing date, January, 1786, he begs, among other blessings, "a sanctified use of the affecting providence." Mr. Audley published, in 1784, an abridgement of John Howe's "Self-Dedication," and Dr. Grosvenor's Sermon on "The Temper of Jesus," to which he prefixed brief lives of the authors. He also published a new and corrected edition of "An Appeal to Parliament, or Sion's plea against the Prelacie," by the father of Archbishop Leighton; and in 1804, "A Sermon on Harvest, or an address to Farmers, Reapers, and Gleaners," founded on Ruth ii. 4. His last work was a short memoir of the Rev. Coxe Feary, of Bluntisham. Mr. Audley died the death of the righteous in 1826, in the seventy-seventh year of his age.

Mr. Housman took his degree of Bachelor of Arts in 1784. Beyond this degree he never proceeded.

Not long before his union with Miss Audley, his zeal in promulgating what he considered the essential doctrines of religion, deprived him of the emolument, and honour of a Fellowship of St. John's. A sermon which he preached in Trinity Church was the cause of determining against him those in whom the patronage resided.

Although, in the choice of a profession, Mr. Housman, as we have seen, had been actuated by considerations of an exclusively religious character, it was not until after his return to Cambridge, in 1783, that he became attached to what are distinctively designated evangelical principles. To his intimacy

with the Rev. Charles Simeon, the origin of this attachment is to be unreservedly ascribed. He was Mr. Simeon's first convert, and was playfully called by him his "eldest son." Whilst preparing to take his degree, in 1784, he accepted an invitation from his affectionate and valuable friend, to share with him his college chambers at King's—St. John's being full; here he resided for upwards of three months in the enjoyment of intellectual and spiritual advantages, the influence and worth of which it is perhaps impossible to compute. To Mr. Simeon's example, conversation and advice, he used to refer, to the end of life in terms of fervent gratitude. "Never," he has said, "did I see such consistency and reality of devotion, such warmth of piety, such zeal, such love. Never did I see one who abounded so much in prayer. I owe that great and holy man, a debt which never can be cancelled." To Mr. Simeon he was also indebted for the privilege of a personal acquaintance with the venerable and highly-gifted Henry Venn, and was frequently of the party of students and young ministers who met for purposes of religious instruction at the house of that distinguished and heroic saint at Yelling. Several years afterwards (in 1817), on introducing Mr. Simeon to a crowded congregation in the Sunday School of St Anne's, Mr. Housman took occasion to speak of his old and constant friend as "the instrument of bringing him to a knowledge of the truth;" and in a sermon of 1829, to which more particular reference will be made in a future page, he mentions him as "one from whom, in the days of his youth, he derived advantages of eternal moment." To his preaching *before* the close of 1783, he has

reverted in the following very interesting passage in a manuscript of the date of 1811 :—

“ The preaching of truth is owned of God ; the publication of error is left to itself. We read of a divine power and blessing accompanying the preaching of the Gospel. It is written—‘ My word shall not return to me void.’ ‘ Lo ! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.’ The Gospel came to the Thessalonians, ‘ not in word only, but in power ;’ and in every instance in which it bringeth salvation, it bringeth it through the power of God applying the word to the soul. Now the Lord will never set his seal to error ; but he *will* set his seal to truth. I meddle not with others, but I may speak of myself. For upwards of two years after I entered the ministry, I preached mere moral discourses. I declaimed against sin ; I recommended virtue ; and I had the blindness and boldness to tell the people, that where *they* fell short, Christ would make up defects. Do you ask what was the effect produced ? I answer—none. In no instance, and in no degree, was any ignorance removed, or any soul benefitted. But when, through the grace of God, I saw *clearly* the nature of the Gospel of Christ, and was enabled simply to preach it, effects soon followed :—effects have *always* followed, wherever I have been placed. In a greater or a less degree, the blind have received their sight ; drunkards have become sober ; profligates have learned to pray ; the miserable have found peace ; and immortal beings have found a blessed immortality. I have seen hundreds, perhaps thousands, drawing near to their last hour. Where Gospel-principles have been unknown or



unfelt, I never saw an instance of that peace, in the trying moment, of which the Scripture speaks. But where Christ has been known, trusted, loved. I have seen more than peace. I have seen Death deprived of its sting, and the Grave deprived of its victory. I have seen sunshine and joy brighten the dying countenance; and the saint of God eager to be gone, to sing his praises before the Throne for ever. These effects, exactly agreeing with what the God of Truth promises in his word, are, I am confident, a stronger proof of what is truth, than if an Angel were to appear and to declare it."

The change of which mention is made in the early part of this paragraph has reference to the worth of human actions, and is most important. Without in any wise supposing the standard of holiness to be lowered, or the demands of the Universal Lawgiver relaxed, Mr. Housman was led, by Mr. Simeon's powerful expositions of divine truth, to see, with a distinctness of vision which neither time nor experience impaired, that the righteousness of man, however eminent, is perfectly inadequate to establish, even in the very smallest degree, a *title* to present justification and to final and future bliss;—that its value consists, in fact, in its being an evidence of a state of heart which utterly excludes and rejects the idea of any such efficacy and claim. From having relied, for acceptance with God, upon the sufficiency of human merit *in part*, he was brought to depend upon the infinite sacrifice and eternal merit of Christ *alone*. Good works, he perceived, could neither constitute, nor *tend* to constitute, a passport to heaven; but though they could not do this, they were indispensable as

signs or tokens of *a meetness for its enjoyment*. "Works that are *really* good ones," he has said, "are neither more nor less than holiness in action; and holiness, without which, we are distinctly told, no man shall see the Lord, consists of principles, dispositions, and affections, springing from the grateful love of a Divine Redeemer and a pardoning God." He was quite as far from teaching antinomianism as self-redemption;—full and free justification, by faith in the atoning death of Christ, implying, to his mind, *necessarily*, the actual and habitual experience of the living power of Jesus. The following passage, extracted from a mutilated manuscript of the year 1797, (the year after his final settlement in Lancaster,) expresses very beautifully his sense of the importance of conformity to the spirit of Christ. "'My sheep,' says the Redeemer, 'hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.' 'I have given you *an example*,' he elsewhere says. And *what* an example is proposed to their love and imitation! What good will to man—what zeal for God—what patience and meekness—what a holy contempt of earthly honours—what a steady pursuit of the work given him, and of the joy set before him. The people of Christ look at his bright character, and admire; and while they look and admire, their feelings, in their better moments, would be expressed by the following prayer: 'Lord of all power and might, oh, mould us into the image of thy beloved Son. While we trust in his Cross, may we walk in his steps. While we rejoice in hope, may our hope purify. May we be a peculiar people, saved by grace, and *zealous* of good works.' Does this

prayer answer to *your* desires, and suit *your* feelings? Are you longing for universal holiness, as well as for pardoning mercy?—for conformity to the image of Christ, as well as for redemption through his blood? If you are, and if you are sincerely praying for the blessing, the marks of the flock are upon you. But if it be no part of your prayer and concern to walk as Christ walked, you want a very decisive evidence that you belong to his fold.”

In another manuscript :—

“ We inquire, and properly inquire, what are the *doctrines* which the Saviour taught; what is the nature and extent of the salvation wrought out by the decease which he accomplished at Jerusalem; what is the faith which receives the atonement, and which unites the soul to the true and living vine. These are questions of deep and eternal moment; to be studied upon our knees, and taught us by the blessed Spirit of God. But they who profess to have a hope towards God, through the redemption of the Cross of Christ, have another question of deep and eternal moment to ask—‘ What were the *tempers* of Christ?’ They were the tempers of meekness and kindness, of long-suffering and benevolence, of compassion and forgiveness of injuries, of humility the most profound, and of tenderness unspeakable. Through every part of his history there shines a bright light of mercy, above the brightness of the sun. He went about doing good; healing diseases; giving sight to the blind; casting out devils; answering prayers; remitting sins; weeping at the grave of a friend; weeping over the murderous city. Consider his words of kindness,

his miracles of kindness, his tears of kindness. Lay them seriously to heart. You profess the Gospel of love; do you do *more* than profess it? Do you feel anything truly of the *power* of this holy and heavenly affection? Oh! be zealous of the *tempers* of Christ, as well as of his *doctrines*. Let his will be as dear to you as his redemption."

And elsewhere :—

"There will be no going to Heaven without a taste or relish for the peculiar happiness of Heaven. It is a vast change of situation, for which a vast meetness of disposition is indispensable. 'Present with the Lord' is a compendious expression of the happiness of the just made perfect; and unless you can feel, cordially and constantly, that in that presence is 'the *fulness* of joy,' you have something important yet to learn. Are you athirst for the glory of God, for a likeness unto Christ? Would Heaven, in your estimation, cease to be heaven, if there the excellency of Jesus were not presented, for the understanding to contemplate, for the heart to love, for the whole soul to adore? If it would not, you are not walking as Christ walked. Your good acts spring from wrong principles. The mind that was in him is not in you. You are not partakers of the *divine nature*."

One more passage on this interesting subject. It reveals, far better than any elaborate exposition, however comprehensive and extended, could reveal, the grand leading points of Mr. Housman's theology.

"Nothing but the *blood* of Christ can save from destruction; nothing but the *righteousness* of Christ can give a title to heavenly bliss; nothing

but the *intercession* of Christ can make prayers and duties accepted ; nothing but the *grace* of Christ can give a meetness for the inheritance and the company of Heaven ; and nothing but the *presence* of Christ can be the light and joy and glory of the eternal kingdom. Without Christ, all is darkness, and ruin and despair."

This extract exhibits as total a freedom from the debasing libertinism of the antinomian, as it does from the hollow and crumbling system of the self-depending moralist. To the views which it presents, Mr. Housman remained "faithful unto death." It is the righteousness of Christ (he taught) that *admits* ; it is the righteousness of man, inwrought by the power of Christ, that *qualifies*. Personal holiness is as *indispensable* as the sacrifice of the Saviour ; but it is the sacrifice of the Saviour alone that is *meritorious*.

The mature developement of the principles which Simeon and Venn had been the providential instruments of planting and fostering in Mr. Housman's mind, must be referred to the combined influence of his matrimonial alliance, and of the friendly intercourse which he enjoyed with some of the most distinguished divines of the Church of England, who contributed so importantly, seventy or eighty years ago, to rouse her from a slothful and pernicious slumber, and to revive the preaching of the truth as it is in Jesus. With Newton, Romaine, Berridge, Riland, and Jones of Creaton, he had repeated opportunities of personally communicating ; and he frequently recurred with grateful pleasure to the profitable hours passed in their society. His more intimate friends do not

require to be told that his familiar discourse was often rendered peculiarly attractive by the relation of racy anecdotes of the sayings and doings of these the revered instructors of his youth.

His first meeting with the Rev. John Berridge, the eccentric author of "The Christian World Unmasked," and "Sion's Songs," was at Creaton (I believe at the house of the venerable Thomas Jones), and was made remarkable by the following incident. When he entered the room in which several eminent ministers were assembled, Berridge, who was seated at the further end of the apartment in an arm chair, held out his hand in a friendly manner to the youthful minister to approach him. Mr. Housman took it; and Mr. Berridge, drawing him nearer, rose up and kissed his forehead affectionately, exclaiming, in a quaint style of address peculiarly his own, "You don't *look* like one of the Devil's children;" and then, after a brief pause, during which he surveyed him with profound interest, "Young man, you have had a famous pluck; and the name of him that plucked you is **HOLDFAST**."

Mr. Housman, who had early learnt to distinguish the substance of Christianity from its circumstantial abuses, loved and respected the sterling worth of Berridge's character as thoroughly as he disliked his evangelical excesses. The uncouth extravagances of a fermentious faith but ill accorded with the notions of one whose piety was calm as well as fervent, and the movements of whose mind, both from natural and habitual causes, were uniformly tranquil. Indeed, few men have been enabled to hit so exactly, or to maintain so consist-

ently, the midway point between enthusiasm and coldness. He exemplified, in a very uncommon degree, the union of "raisedness" and sobriety of soul; and his deliberate predilections were for those aspects of practical religion in which elevation and composure most harmoniously appeared. In Mr. Berridge, accordingly, there was much that he could not relish.\*

During the spring and summer months of 1785, Mr. Housman resided with his wife in Lancaster, at the Judges' Lodgings, and performed the afternoon service at St. John's Chapel on the Sundays.

On Wednesday evenings a small party of young men, I believe not amounting to more than six or eight, belonging to the humbler classes, were in the habit of assembling at his rooms for purposes of spiritual intercommunion and edification. A practice so much at variance with that of the Clergy of the place (for prayer-meetings had hitherto been restricted to the Dissenters) soon attracted the attention, and incurred the reproaches, of the Orthodox. Innovations in ecclesiastical discipline, even though manifestly advantageous, are con-

"The Christian World Unmasked," notwithstanding its numerous faults of taste and temper, is a book of great merit. It contains much vigorous thought, and some good writing; but the language is often coarse, and the sentiments are often vulgar. Apart from the value of the *doctrines* which it inculcates, it is recommended by a hearty earnestness of manner, at all times agreeable; and by transient but lovely gleams of fancy, which never fail to please.

In the Memoirs of Lady Huntingdon, (vol. I. p. 373,) there is an excellent letter to Mr. Berridge, from his opulent and pious friend, Mr. Thornton. This letter is well worth reading. It reflects very strongly upon the buffoonery of the Vicar of Everton, who, in his reply, frankly admits the accusation, and acknowledges that he was born "with a fool's cap upon his head."

stantly looked upon with suspicion, unless originating at head quarters, or at least sanctioned by imposing authority; in the present case, having no patronage but that of the God of prayer, Mr. Housman's presumptuous introduction of an apostolic custom, condemning as it did by implication the supineness of the "prudent Peters" in the ministry, provoked a mingled sentiment of professional and personal indignation. The Bishop was written to, but he declined interfering: and the vexatious malcontents were checked in their devices. Mr. Housman, meanwhile, not heedless of the opposition he had caused, but undiscouraged by it, proceeded in his holy work; and a blessing from on high attended it.

The sole surviving member of this devout society, who had received his religious convictions through its means, informs me, that having read, and carefully expounded a select portion of the New Testament, Mr. Housman's plan upon these occasions, was, to invite unreserved and general conversation respecting the several topics they had been considering. The liberal interchange of opinions and emotions thus judiciously provided for, was felt to be productive of great and lasting good; impressions being made, and principles ingrafted, the salutary influences of which extended through life. In these interesting conferences Mrs. Housman bore an active part. My informant describes her as a beautiful young woman, grave and pious; her gentleness and her affability, he adds, were singularly attractive. It was her constant practice, at the close of the evening's engagements, which usually continued about an hour or an hour and a half, to



enter into familiar discourse with each of the small congregation; to offer a few words of instruction or exhortation suited to their respective circumstances and conditions; and on ending, to shake hands with them in a spirit of sincere Christian equality and friendship. On the night of their last meeting, she addressed them with affectionate earnestness; in-treating them, as they valued the temporal and eter-nal prosperity of their souls, to take heed and walk circumspectly, to be diligent, steadfast, unmoveable, *always* abounding in the work of the Lord, that they might be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless. To this end she counselled, in a manner the most solemn, a frequent assembling of themselves together for purposes of praise and prayer; and in taking leave, which she did under the effect of strong excitement, presented them with her own private copy of Watts' Psalms and Hymns, in the hope, she added, that it might be preserved, if they never met again, as a memento of spiritual fellowship and regard. The next morn-ing accompanied by her husband, she left Lancaster for ever.

In the course of one of the familiar conversations alluded to in the foregoing paragraph, Mr. Hous-man's opinions on a still contested point of divinity were distinctly expressed. Being requested to state his views on the subject of a sensible evidence of acceptance with God, his reply was this; "Wil-liam," he exclaimed, "I would venture my soul upon the truth of it." I question whether he would have *said* as much in later life, but I am sure he *held* the conviction no less positively; and few men have had greater reason to hold it. I ought,

however to add, and many of the letters in the following pages confirm the statement, that whilst he uncompromisingly maintained the fact of a *direct* witnessing of the Holy Spirit with the spirit of man (a persuasion explicitly announced in his important communication to Mr. Ludlam\*) he was far from insisting upon the indispensableness of such internal testimony at all times and under all circumstances. A different policy has led many a pilgrim to the Slough of Despond, and left him there. It should be observed also, that in order to guard against delusion, he invariably connected the doctrine of a divinely attested assurance of pardon and adoption, with that of the witnessing of *our own spirit*, indicated by the habitaal manifestation of love, joy, peace, long-suffering, meekness, gentleness, fidelity, humbleness, and temperance. "In what way," he asks, in one of his published sermons, "are you to expect the high consolation of a *knowledge* of acceptance? Not by sudden impulses; not by having the animal feelings powerfully excited; not by supposed lights or visions. Look for the rich blessings in the way of the Gospel; by seeking to have your inward experience in agreement with the word of God. If you find a real self-abhorrence on account of your sins; if you are ashamed and grieved that you have dishonoured by your iniquity the God of all grace and glory; if you are enabled to look simply to the Lamb of God to take away your transgressions; if the Lord should give you great tenderness of conscience to avoid sin, and the occasions of sin; if he should implant in your soul the love of his name, and of his people, and

\* Printed in a future page.

of his ways, and cause, and commandments; you will have evidence—solid, scriptural, triumphant evidence—that the Lord hath put away your sin, and that you shall not die.” And in a manuscript of the year 1812, he thus advises on the same subject. “Perhaps you are seeking the manifestation of the mercy in a wrong way. You may be expecting to receive some sudden and strangely influential impression made upon your mind; some text of Scripture brought with power to your souls; some joyous feeling, lifting you as it were, above all fears, and placing you in a state of rapturous entrancement. I venture to advise you to seek the assurance of God’s mercy (though I dare not presume to say *how* it may come to you) in a very different way. Seek it, by seeking *those dispositions of the heart which none but the Lord can give*; which distinguish the people of God from the people of the world; and with which the promises connect everlasting salvation. Seek, for instance, by diligence in the means, poverty of spirit; a contrite heart: a consciousness that you trust in Jesus; a confidence that you really love him; a certainty that you prefer his favour before anything besides, and that you are unfeignedly endeavouring and praying that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. These are evidences which cannot deceive you: and in proportion as you attain them, you will have solid manifestations, perhaps extraordinary manifestations occasionally, of the Lord’s special love to your souls.”

On the death of his wife, which took place soon after they returned to Cambridge, in the winter of 1785, Mr. Housman re-visited Lancashire, and resi-

ded with his parents for several months. During the earlier part of this period he was engaged in supplying the Incumbency of Caton, and, towards the close of it, again officiated, for at least half a year, as curate of St. John's Chapel in Lancaster. His engagement here commenced about the end of 1785, and was concluded in the following May. In the Spring of the former year he was invited to plead the cause of the Charity School for Girls; and accordingly, on Sunday the 1st of May, delivered at St. John's a discourse from 1 Cor. x. 31: "Whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." The sermon was published, and the profits arising from the sale of it were applied to the use of the excellent institution in recommendation and support of which it had been preached.

His farewell sermon at St. John's, in which the principal doctrines of the Gospel were enumerated, and the necessity of believing them with a true heart was proved and enforced gave great offence. The total depravity of man by nature; the absolute inefficacy of good works to procure acceptance with God; justification, only through the voluntary sacrifice of Jesus Christ; the influences of the Holy Ghost, first to enlighten the understanding, to purify the affections, to renew the will, and then to superintend and control them in the way of holiness and peace; were set forth with a warmth, an energy, and an impressiveness, which startled and dismayed. It is impossible that a set of subjects more exactly calculated to affright, and to disgust a Lancaster Episcopalian congregation of the year 1786, could have been selected. Many persons abruptly left the chapel in the midst of the discourse;

and on being published a few weeks later, in order that they who had heard confused and incorrect accounts of it might judge for themselves, it was so unfortunate as to excite the more particular indignation of a learned laic resident in the town, who rashly recorded his theology and his spleen in an angry and rather absurd pamphlet, in the preparation of which it is understood that he was aided by one of Mr. Housman's nearest connections (a unitarian minister) and by one of his oldest friends. To this petulant production Mr. Housman vouchsafed no answer; but in 1788 the Rev. George Burder, the well-known and excellent author of "Village Sermons," and formerly pastor of the Independent Church in High Street, feeling that it had a tendency to deceive the unwary, and confirm the ignorant in their dangerous mistakes, (for it taught baptismal regeneration, and what Latimer used to call *mingle-mangle*, or a mixed justification, resulting from the joint efficacy of faith and good works), prepared and published, "at the request of many of the friends of truth in Lancaster," a temperate and able vindication of the discourse. In the design of his defence, which was to prove that the doctrines in question are the doctrines of the Bible; that they were so esteemed by the Reformers; that they had become shamefully and generally deserted; and that consequently Mr. Housman was free from the charge of being a setter forth of *strange* doctrine, and a false accuser of his clerical brethren—Mr. Burder succeeded. The least creditable part of his pamphlet, considering that the writer was an orthodox evangelical dissenter, is that which attempts to show an agreement

between Mr. Housman's opinions on the subject of Regeneration, and those of the Established Church, by giving a circuitous explanation of the latter. There is an evasiveness here, and an uncomfortable haste in getting away from the point, which plainly evince a sense of difficulty and distress. Mr. Housman's mode of reconciling the discrepancy will be met with in another part of the memoir; it is somewhat more elaborate than Mr. Burder's, but scarcely more convincing. Both he and Mr. Burder, in fact, disliked the task. Mr. Burder wished to vindicate Mr. Housman from inconsistency and Mr. Housman wished to vindicate his Church from false doctrine.

Against the ruinous fallacy of Baptismal Regeneration he had lifted up a faithful voice, on an occasion previous to that at present under review. In one of the sermons preached at St. John's at the beginning of 1786, the manuscript of which lies before me (it is the very sermon to which his anonymous assailant refers at page 15 of his pamphlet), he thus condemns the deadly notion.

"Many have been the attempts of the opposers of true religion, to set aside the necessity, or disguise the nature, of the great work of Regeneration. As to those who deny its necessity, the denial must be ascribed to their own ignorance of God, themselves, and the sacred writings; and they who disguise its nature generally call it Baptism. But while we have the Bible in our hands, we need not scruple positively to assert, on the combined authority of innumerable isolated passages, and of the general scope of the New Testament records, that Baptism is not Regeneration. Baptism is an out-

ward work upon the body; Regeneration is an inward work upon the soul. Baptism, I grant, is a sacramental *sign* of Regeneration; just as the Lord's Supper is a sacramental *sign* of the body and blood of Christ; and therefore Baptism may be called Regeneration, by the same figure which Christ uses when he says of the bread, 'This is my body.' Baptism is only *typical* of an inward change, and can be of no avail except it be accompanied with what our catechism calls 'a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness.' The outward and visible sign may make a Christian by name; but it is only the inward and spiritual grace which can make a Christian in reality. This will be evident, when we have described the true nature of regeneration."

He then proceeds to describe it as consisting, not of a mere formal admission into external covenant with God, after which the person admitted is warranted in appropriating to himself all the promises of the Gospel, just as the Jews, after circumcision, were entitled to claim all the privileges of the Mosaic dispensation—in which case Baptism *would* be Regeneration; but as consisting of an entire change in the dispositions of the heart and mind, the eradication of evil, and the implanting of holy desires, through the sole agency of "the same Power which made the worlds."

When he was preparing to leave Lancaster, shortly after the delivery of the sermon at St. John's, and prior to the appearance of Mr. Burder's Vindication, two females, to whose hearts the word of God had come with power under his ministry, being greatly distressed at the prospect of his absence,

requested him to inform them where they might receive spiritual advantages similar to those so abundantly imparted to them by his preaching. He unhesitatingly mentioned the Independent Chapel as the only place of worship in Lancaster, in which, according to his interpretation of the Scriptures, the distinguishing and essential doctrines of the Gospel were fully and faithfully exhibited. In accordance with this liberal advice they immediately joined the dissenters assembling in High Street, among whom they continued to be regular and devout worshippers during the nine years that intervened between the departure of their beloved minister from Lancaster, and the building of St. Anne's in 1795. When this event took place, their personal regard for Mr. Housman led them to attend his chapel, to which they habitually resorted for the remainder of their days.

If it be said that in maturer life Mr. Housman would have abstained from giving such advice as the preceding paragraph represents him to have given, the validity of the objection is at once admitted. The circumstances which *justified* that council were entirely changed. The preaching of "the truth as it is in Jesus" had revived within the Establishment; and Mr. Housman, as a warm and zealous friend of the National Church, equally attached to her discipline, her doctrines, and her liturgy, would have felt himself disloyal to her interests, had he enjoined, or in any wise encouraged a secession from her pale. But I may mention, that fifty-one years after the transaction above recorded, upon the occasion of a near and dear relative withdrawing from the Establishment, and



uniting himself to the very same body of Dissenters, Mr. Housman's remark, when he first received the intelligence, (and I have reason to believe that he lamented the fact), was simply and emphatically this; "Let every one be persuaded in his own mind." I am convinced, that under similar circumstances, he would have acted in 1837 exactly as he did in 1786.

On leaving Lancaster, Mr. Housman resided at Market Harborough, whither he went in the summer of 1786, having been appointed to the cure of Langton, about four miles distant. Here he did not remain much more than a year; but his ministrations, notwithstanding the violent opposition of some of the leading families in the neighbourhood, were abundantly owned and blessed of God. During two short visits which he and his wife paid to Miss Coltman of Leicester, in 1785,\* on their way to and from Lancaster, he had become acquainted with the Rev. Thomas Robinson, the author of "Scripture Characters;" and in consequence of an invitation from Mr. Robinson, for whom he had repeatedly preached whilst at Langton, he repaired to Leicester towards the close of 1787, and officiated; for about the space of twelve months, as the curate of that truly conscientious and devoted man.

In the capacity of Mr. Robinson's assistant he was fully and profitably employed. He preached and read prayers at least once every Sunday; performed the service alternately with his principal at the Infirmary, besides sharing with him, to a very

\* A Memoir of Miss Coltman, by her niece, Miss Cooper, is in preparation.

considerable extent, the laborious parochial duties of St. Mary's; and occasionally, when the illness or absence of Mr. Robinson required his substitution, delivered the Tuesday and Sunday Evening Lecture. To attendance upon the sick, and visiting the poor and afflicted, he dedicated large portions of his time, and was in the habit in after life of gratefully referring to these engagements as having contributed most importantly to the intimate familiarity which he possessed with the secret and mysterious depths and winding recesses of the human heart.

From Leicester he proceeded in 1788 to Markfield, a village in the neighbourhood. Of this place, the rector of which, Dr. Baddeley, was non-resident, he had the entire charge for about two years; at the end of which time, being threatened with consumption, he adopted the suggestions of his medical advisers, who counselled his return to Leicester, (for Markfield was exposed and cold); and, after a short interval of repose, resumed his services at St. Mary's—preaching on the Sunday afternoon, and reading prayers in the morning. On the death of Mrs. Robinson, in 1791, he preached her Funeral Sermon; and christened the present Professor Robinson, late Archdeacon of Madras, the same night.

It was at the house of Mr. Robinson that he contracted, among many important and influential friendships, a personal intimacy with the Rev. Thomas Scott, the indefatigable and pious Commentator, with whom, both at that period and subsequently, he enjoyed the privilege of corresponding. His letters unfortunately perished in the general

destruction of papers that took place at Mr. Scott's death.

Whilst at Langton, he had become acquainted with his second wife, Jane Adams, a woman of strong and masculine understanding, to whom he was united, immediately before settling at Markfield, at the Church of St. Nicholas in Leicester, on the 24th of September, 1788. Mrs. Housman, who had been a private pupil of Mr. Robinson's, was the author of "The History of Susan Ward," a popular tract published by the Religious Tract Society. The *scene* of this simple and instructive little story was the picturesque vicinity of Langton; the "clergyman" who performs so prominent a part in it, the lamented subject of the present memoir.

The tract was introduced to the Committee of the Society by the late Rev. Joseph Hughes, for many years the laborious Secretary; in the course of little more than twelve months it went through six editions—two of five thousand copies each, and four of ten thousand. "Surely," says Mrs. Housman, in allusion to the extraordinary popularity of her unpretending narrative, "surely what is so widely distributed, will produce *some* good. Should I be honoured with but *one* star in my crown, my joy would be great. But God must take *all the glory*."

Of "Susan Ward" the reader will find repeated mention in this volume. Mr. Housman alludes particularly to it in one of his sermons; and in one of his letters to a female correspondent, who was engaged in ministering to the temporal and spiritual necessities of a sick domestic, it is thus

recommended ; "The end to be aimed at," he says, in reference to the invalid, "is to bring her, through grace, to self-knowledge. On this essential point she seems to be very defective. But the Lord, in one moment, can give her such a view as will lay her low, and make the Saviour very precious. If you have the tract of 'Susan Ward,' pray read it to her. It seems exactly to suit her case. I have not one, or I would send it." Mr. Housman knew nothing of the tract till he saw it lying on his table one morning, his wife having laid it there the previous evening. He immediately recognized the facts and guessed the author.

The daughter of pious parents, Mrs. Housman had enjoyed the inestimable responsibility of an early education in the principles of true religion, enforced and recommended by the example of eminent Christian practice. Her father, Mr. Adams, was a member of the church of England ; but, in common with great numbers of good men at that eventful period, not hearing at his parish church what he deemed a faithful exposition of the essential doctrines of the Bible, he so far seceded from the Establishment as to become a regular attendant at the Methodist meetings held from time to time in Ashby-de-la-Zouch, where he resided. Subsequently he contributed largely to the erection of a commodious chapel, in which Christian worship, according to the tenets and forms of the Connexion, was celebrated. In Mrs. Adams he had a sympathizing help-meet. This admirable woman, who lived to see her daughter united in marriage to Mr. Housman, was an intimate friend and frequent companion of "the elect lady," Selina, Countess of

Huntingdon,\* as well as of many of the excellent ministers who, in various ways and in different degrees, laboured about the middle of the last century, with such apostolic zeal and self-denial, in the cause of the everlasting Gospel. Her house was consequently the resort of such men as Wesley, Whitefield, Fletcher of Madeley, Newton, Berridge, Venn, Romaine, Mason, (the author of "Spiritual Treasury,") Jones (of St. Saviour's, Southwark,) and others of less note. Mrs. Housman distinctly remembered sitting when a child upon John Wesley's knee; and used to speak with pleasure of his patting her head and blessing her.†

Mrs. Adams, whose maiden name was Bate-man, had suffered persecution for the truth's sake. Being greatly affected by the preaching of George Whitefield, whom she had incidentally heard in the neighbourhood of her home, she determined to ally herself to the party of which that very remarkable man was so distinguished a representative, and after much and careful deliberation, an-

\* Her Ladyship was Mrs. Housman's godmother.

† John Adams, Esq., of Broomsgrove, in Worcestershire, Mrs. Housman's only brother, recollects having seen John Wesley at his father's house at Ashby; he also heard him preach in a field adjoining. On this occasion his prayers were unusually short, not extending beyond a period of four minutes; and his sermon, which generally lasted scarce half an hour, was plain, direct, and unimpassioned. A little before ten o'clock at night Mr. Wesley lighted his bed candle, and took out his watch; and with his watch in one hand, and the candle in the other, continued talking at a great rate until the hour was completed. He then abruptly retired, leaving the conversation to be resumed in the morning. Mr. Adams says that the popular portraits of the illustrious Founder of Methodism are exaggerated. Mr. Wesley was neither so thin as he is represented, nor did he wear his hair so long. He exhibited wonderful cheerfulness of spirits.

nounced her intention to her father. Mr. Bateman, a thoughtless, extravagant, and imperious country gentleman, who prided himself on his relationship to Lord Bateman (he was his second cousin), had conceived, in common with the bulk of his order, a deadly horror of the Methodists, and, on finding his daughter to be smitten with the infection, his hatred broke out in furious anger against his offending child. He told her that of course she had a perfect right to please herself in the choice of a religion, but he accompanied the concession, in the true spirit and after the established habit of intolerance, with a peremptory declaration that if she *did* please herself he would disinherit her. The poor girl, encompassed by difficulties, took time to consider; she consulted her friends; she laid her case before the Lord in earnest and frequent prayer; and the result of her consultations and supplications was, a conviction that she ought to serve God rather than man, and a heroic resolution to abide by it. Her father, on hearing this decision, was as good as his word. He had permitted the liberty of private judgment, and he was prepared to inflict the threatened penalty. Taking out his purse, he presented his daughter with a shilling—opened the door of his house—and commanding her to see his face no more, bade her farewell. Mary Bateman, cut to the heart by conduct so unfeeling, took the proffered gift, and exclaiming, as she passed the threshold, “With this and God’s blessing I will go through the world,” left her unrelenting parent and the home of her youth, for ever. Circumstances such as these could not remain untalked of. They reached the

ears of Lady Huntingdon, who, with characteristic generosity, offered the desolate sufferer an asylum in her own house. The offer, so frankly made, was no less frankly accepted; and the acquaintance thus providentially begun, soon ripened into profound friendship. Mrs. Adams never forgot the obligations she owed to her noble protectress; and Lady Huntingdon had reason to bless God for giving her a companion at once pious, affectionate, and judicious.

Among the most faithful of Mary Bateman's Christian friends, at this trying juncture of her life, were the Rev. John Edwards, well known as "Edwards of Leeds," and the Rev. Thomas Jones, equally well known as "Jones of St. Saviour's, Southwark." At a time when "each man," to use the language of George Whitefield, "was a legion," these unwearied ministers occupied front ranks in the battle for the truth. The earlier periods of Edwards' history are involved in obscurity. He was born in 1714, at Shrewsbury, and itinerated for several years in England and Wales, but more extensively in Ireland, where he obtained the ridiculous but not dishonourable appellation of "Swaddling John" or "John the Swaddler,"—Swaddler being a term of reproach synonymous with 'Methodist.\*' In dispensing the word of God he endured excessive opposition, both from the Roman

\* The origin of the term was as follows. Soon after the introduction of Methodism into Ireland, Mr. Cennick was preaching in Dublin on a Christmas day from Luke ii. 12. A drunken fellow, not having heard the passage before, thought "swaddling clothes" an oddish sort of expression, and running along the street, exclaimed as he went, "They are Swaddlers—they are Swaddlers." The term was an absurd one, and accordingly became established.

Catholic population and the clergy of the established Church, and underwent perils of a sufficiently primitive and apostolic kind to suit the most perverse stickler for the wisdom and the ways of antiquity. Upon one occasion, a furious multitude of White Boys having surrounded the house in which he had taken refuge, and being loud in their threatenings to burn it to the ground, Edwards was let down through one of the windows, like St. Paul, in a basket. He alighted, however, in the garden of a Justice of the Peace who had distinguished himself as a bitter persecutor of the Swaddlers; and fearing the family might observe him, and charge him with felonious designs, he stood for some time in a state of considerable consternation. At length, venturing to knock at the door, he asked for the "squire," and on being introduced to the august presence of the great man, ingenuously stated the circumstances of his position, and besought his protection. The Justice, though a bigot, was kind-hearted. The Swaddler's appeal won his confidence, and he entertained him at his house two days in a hospitable manner.

Having dissolved his connexion with Mr. Wesley, with whom he had long been a fellow-labourer, Mr. Edwards, attended by many friends, withdrew to Leeds, built a chapel there, and continued to minister in it for the space of thirty years, an intrepid champion of the truth. A short time before his death, which took place in 1785, he destroyed all his papers. The following letters, addressed to Miss Bateman, and written, at least the first of them, immediately before her cruel expulsion from home, will be read with interest.



**"MY DEAR MISS BATEMAN.**—My heart's desire and prayer for you is, that the consolation of the Holy Ghost may be multiplied unto you by Jesus Christ.

**"Your remembrance is sweet and comfortable to my very soul; being verily persuaded that you are chosen of God the Father, purchased by Jesus Christ, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost to that glorious and eternal inheritance; in consequence whereof you have made Immanuel your everlasting choice. He is your well-beloved, in whom your soul is well pleased. Is he not altogether lovely, in his person, offices, graces, and ordinances? 'Oh! yes,' methinks I hear you answer, 'even though he slay me. Yet his righteousness shall be my righteousness, his people shall be my people, and his God my God.' Then fear not, thou precious soul; 'tis the Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. The Lord is your Shepherd, and therefore you shall not want. For this you may rejoice, and again I say rejoice, that God is engaged in so near and so sweet a relation to you. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow you all the days of your life, and you shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. Oh! the height, and depth, and length, and breadth, of that love which passeth all knowledge! Oh! what manner of love is this? Oh! uncreated Love, beginning without beginning; and ending without end! Can omnipotence secure, unsearchable riches suffice, can all fulness content you? If so, you are blessed, and shall be blessed. The Lord Jesus is your glory, your joy, and your crown. Why, then, may you not with boldness enter into that joy**

which is unspeakable, that grace and glory to which your Lord and Head is gone before you? Jesus is the door; Jesus is the porter;—who then shall hold you out? Who shall pluck you out of the hand of omnipotence? Jesus, the good Shepherd, hath loved you, sought you, and found you; and now, being found, will he lose the object of his love, the purchase of his blood? No;—‘Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out.’ Who art thou, O great mountain, that appearest so formidable? Before Zerubabel thou shalt become a plain; and He shall bring forth the top-stone with shoutings, crying, ‘Grace, grace unto it.’ Oh! madam, yet a little while, and we shall meet in those blessed mansions where our great and glorious High Priest is gone before; where we shall no more be compelled to sit by the rivers of Babylon, and to hang our harps on the willows; but, having every string in tune—in sweetest harmony and ineffable delight, we shall sing Hallelujah, Honour, Glory, and Power, to Him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, for ever and ever. Even so—come, Lord Jesus: come quickly. Amen.

“Please to tender my best respects to Mr. and Mrs. Bateman. I should have written to Mr. Rositer, but Time—Time. My kindest love to him and his dear companion. Thanks be to God, our portion, our inheritance, is not in this perishing world. Tell them ’tis all blank ———. Love to dear Miss Bateman. I commend her to the living God; and remain her most affectionate friend and brother in Christ,

JOHN EDWARDS.”

After her father’s death, Miss Bateman resided with her mother, (the most affectionate attachment

having invariably subsisted between them,) until her marriage with Mr. Adams, in 1765. The year before this event, Mr. Edwards addressed her as follows.

“LEEDS, Oct. 27, 1764.

“DEAR POLLY.—Perhaps by this time some of my London friends have thought me long in writing. I think so myself, but hope they will excuse me, and allow for the extraordinary hurry my being so long from home has thrown upon me. We continue, through mercy, in peace and tolerable health. I hope the Lord’s work goes on comfortably amongst us, though we have no very remarkable stirs. My part is diligence and dependence;—Oh! that I could grow in this way! Success is at the Lord’s disposal, and I trust he has not fixed me here in vain.

“What an honour and a blessing to be in his service! Surely I can stand to David’s choice and say, I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked, however prosperous and pleasing. But he has given me more than this. He has called me, not to be a door-keeper, but to go in and out before his people, to break the bread of life to them. This is the one thing I earnestly desire of the Lord, that I might still, all the days of my life, behold his beauty, and inquire at his Temple. He has hitherto granted it, and I rejoice in his goodness. I would not change my calling for all the wealth of the Indies. Yet it is a service full of difficulty and temptation. I might well tremble at every attempt, and should be utterly discouraged if I did not know that the grace of the Lord Jesus is sufficient for

me. I know he is made of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, to poor sinners; and this just suits me. Without these blessings I must be miserable. In myself I have them not—they are treasured up in Him as water in the ocean. And he is beyond expression ready to distribute, willing to communicate. He says, 'Ask, and ye shall receive.' 'Open your mouth *wide*, and I will fill it.' Lord, we believe; help thou our unbelief. We desire; do thou exceed our largest wishes, according to the riches of thy grace.

"I hope you have at most but two frames:—are either rejoicing in the light of God's countenance (this is pleasant indeed;) or if not so, at least mourning after him, and seeking him with your whole heart. This, though not so pleasant, is, in its season, equally profitable. When we are in the light, we learn something of God; when we are in the dark, we learn something of ourselves. But to be deprived of the Lord's presence, and yet insensible of our loss, so as to be able to take satisfaction in something short of his love—this is a dangerous state, upon the very brink of temptation and a fall. The Lord keep us from it. May we maintain a godly jealousy of ourselves, and remember that Satan desires to have us, that he may sift us even as wheat. Dependence and prayer are ours. Keep near the Lord Jesus:—endeavour to call back your wandering mind many times in an hour, if it should so often rove from the consideration of his person and his grace. I have read many books, and tried many means to preserve my heart in frame, and I find nothing comparable to the Apostle's precept—*Looking unto Jesus*. He is, or

should be, that to every believer, which the Sun is to the natural world. His light is necessary, and his shining desirable; when he is in view we can hardly go wrong. It is because he is so often out of sight that we have so many complaints. O thou shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest thy people like a flock; thou that dwellest between the cherubim, shine forth and revive our hearts! Wilt thou not revive us again, that thy people may rejoice in thee? Grace be with you all. JOHN EDWARDS."

The next letter from the Countess of Huntingdon to Miss Bateman, has reference to the laying of the foundation-stone of the celebrated chapel at Bath, a circumstance, of which, considering the importance of the occasion, it is remarkable that no notice is taken in the recently published memoirs of her Ladyship.

"MY DEAR BATEMAN.—I have taken the resolution to stay this summer in this part of the world, and hope you will come and see me while I am at Bath. Mrs. Davies's house I am in full possession of on Monday next, and shall have a room for you; I hope your mother will be so kind as not to be against your coming. Before you come down, I shall be glad to know what Mr. Romaine will do about Brighton, and if he intends being there. I have written to Mrs. Madan, but have had no answer. I purpose to write this post, and also to Mr. Berridge, that I may be sure they are well supplied. I find such a backwardness in all our fine clergy in preaching the Gospel, that I really know not what to make of it; but I believe it has a great lesson which I am to attend to—that the Lord himself will be my shepherd, that I may lack nothing.

I believe this whole affair of the chapel here has the marks of his hand, as evidently as it is possible for them to appear in any human work. I have not had one line from any quarter to approve or rejoice in the matter; the whole lies between my heart and himself; and in blessing he will bless it, and in multiplying he will multiply; and this is my joy. An uncommon blessing attended the laying the first stone; and Moravians and others were all peculiarly sensible of it. That all throughout the whole of this business the Lord has been his own witness, bows my heart before him, to give him all the praise and all the glory; that no man's hand is in it, is no small matter of thanks to me. My soul designs to trust him alone, for, and in, all things. He is full and sufficient for all purposes, both in heaven and in earth. I find it a hard lesson; but I am sure it is the best lesson he means to make his creature perfect and clear in.

"I have ordered a stone with 'M. B.' upon it, which you are to pay for. I have ordered it to be placed at the other corner of the foundation, and to be the principal stone on the left hand of the building, as mine is on the right. This your dear heart seemed to wish, so that a share in the blessing that followed the undertaking, might be your portion; and this *my* heart as much desires for you as your own can do.

"My love to your mother and Mrs. Jones. When you see poor Kitty,\* tell her I remember her in love. I hope you will see dear Mrs. Carteret and Mrs. Cavendish† before you come away; and

\* Formerly Miss Bateman's servant.

† These ladies are mentioned in the correspondence of Mr. Venn, p. 225, 3d Ed.

do ask Briscoe if he will take the jewels at the price. Tell him, as I have not been in town since, that they are sealed up, and as he left them, and that I am willing to part with them. Mr. Carteret has the key, and Mr. Hastings of Queen Ann's street will go for them.\* SELINA HUNTINGDON."

Immediately after Miss Bateman's marriage, Lady Huntingdon addressed the following letter to Mr. Adams, who, it appears, had coupled an announcement of the event with an offer of his wife's services, in case they should ever be wanted by her kind and noble protectress.

"June 13, 1765.

"DEAR MR. ADAMS.—I am bound to thank you for your kind letter. I am glad (supposing it best) that the event is over which promises happiness to you and dear Mrs. Adams. You are kind in your offers of her services to me; but a woman is bound to her husband, and I look upon no further right in her heart for one moment. It is yours, freely given by herself. My love for her will never be lost or forgotten; but she knows all my sentiments on this subject. *Your house, your family, your children, your pursuits,* must and ought wholly to engross her; and unless you had hoped this from her, you should never have chosen her. And, dear Mr. Adams, how unsuitable is all this to the pilgrim-life which necessity makes mine! To you it will at all times be convenient to visit me, and my heart will ever rejoice to welcome *her*; but, as for one hour's comfort from her while on earth, I neither can nor ought any more to *expect* it than one in

\* In 1760, her ladyship disposed of jewels to the amount of £698. 15. 0.; the proceeds she applied to religious purposes.

Turkey. <sup>far</sup> as I know anything, it appears quite *impossible* I should ever again be where you kind <sup>to</sup> welcome me, till I am to rest from every earthly labour.\* We must wait for our meeting in heaven; for true liberty is only there, except that which faith gives us here. Remember, if ever you feel the spirit of heaviness which I cannot help feeling at the loss of a friend, that it is you who have deprived me of *her*. For the happiness of both of you I shall ever pray; but will never hazard interfering with it for an instant.

"Nothing can be more heavy to me than the view I have of my Derbyshire journey; it is altogether in the spirit of sacrifice that I take it. I neither see, hope, nor expect anything from it, but simply obey the call, which you and Mrs. Dobins thought due from me in the service of the Gospel. Be so good as to inquire if Mr. Sellon had my letter.† If a burdened, afflicted, and distressed heart can bring a blessing, mine is enough to set the whole country in a flame.

SELINA HUNTINGDON."

The Rev. Thomas Jones, of whom mention has been made in a previous page, as one of the very few friends at whose hands Miss Bateman, when discarded by her natural protector, received the consolations of Christian sympathy and Christian coun-

\* The family vault of the Huntingdons was at Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

† Mr. Sellon (who is mentioned also in one of Mr. Berridge's letters a little further on) was originally a baker, and became one of Wesley's lay preachers; afterwards, through Lady Huntingdon's influence, he obtained orders in the Established Church. He bore rather a prominent part in the controversial disputes which followed the famous discussion at Bristol between the Calvinistic and Arminian Methodists. Sellon took the Wesleyan side of the question.



sel, was born in 1729, and, having a devoted uncommon zeal and great talents, of course of evangelical religion, under numberless and almost harassing insults, his health at length gave way, and he was called to rest at the early age of thirty-three. Mr. Jones was connected by marriage with Miss Bateman, having been united, some years before his death, to Jane, her second sister.

The following interesting letter, dated October 21, 1760, was written to Mary Bateman whilst she resided with the Countess of Huntingdon.

“MY DEAR POLLY.—I take up my pen to give you an answer to that part of your letter, where you ask ‘if I would accept of a living in the country, if it was as good as my own.’

“This is what I have had upon my mind a long time; ever since the beginning of my illness, I have formed a strange desire to be removed to a country parish. I have been afraid to indulge the thought, and God knows I have frequently prayed against it, fearing it was a temptation of the enemy. I have therefore begged of God to make me contented in my station, and reconcile me to the cross; but I have still been haunted with this strong desire; whether or no it is from the Lord, the event will determine. I have been afraid of mentioning my desire (though sometimes I could not help it) lest I should be indulging my own self-will: but I determined secretly within myself, that if ever a living should be offered me, I would look upon such offer as a door of Providence opened, and a call from God for my removal. I am still of that mind, especially when I consider that my present parishioners do not receive my ministry. I speak

of them now in general, as a people; there are a blessed few, I trust, who receive the truth in the love of it; but, in general, my person is despised, and my ministry rejected. If I have attempted to promote a knowledge of God among my people, whether by expounding, lecturing, &c., I have been constantly opposed and hindered. Again, my weakness and inability to visit the sick and to take care of so large a parish, has been a burden upon my mind a long time, and made me wish for a living where I could be at liberty, and have a church at my command, and no more people than I could visit and be acquainted with. These considerations incline me to answer 'yes' to your proposal. You will therefore give my respectful duty to my Lady, and tell her I shall thankfully receive a living in the country equal to my own, which is £150 a year. I would not willingly have it less, by reason of my frequent and expensive illnesses. I pray God direct me aright, and order all things concerning me according to his own blessed will. Pray for me that his presence and blessing may attend me wherever I go. I am much obliged to Lady Huntingdon for her kind letter; thank her Ladyship in my name. I will take the first opportunity to answer it, when I know where to direct, as I suppose, you will soon remove from where you are.

"I pray God keep you, my dear sister, as the apple of his eye. May the dear Lord Jesus set your heart at liberty, and show you all his great salvation. My wife, I suppose, has told you what news our family affords, &c. THOMAS JONES."

Mr Jones never got the living; he continued at St. Saviour's till the day of his death.

I am in possession of one other letter addressed by this truly excellent man to Miss Bateman. It is dated the 5th of May, 1762; exactly a month before he entered into his rest. His correspondent, who still resided with Lady Huntingdon, lay ill of a fever at her Ladyship's house in New Norfolk street, Grosvenor Square.

“CASTLE STREET, May 5, 1762.

“MY DEAR SISTER.—I fully intended calling upon you yesterday, but it hath pleased God to prevent me by laying his hand upon me. I caught cold on Sunday evening last, being overtaken by that violent rain, for I could get no coach. My dear wife, through divine mercy, is better, and I am now in hopes she will soon be restored.

“I truly feel for you under your present affliction. May it be abundantly sanctified. May the absence of earthly friends be supplied by the divine presence, and in the midst of your tribulations may God's comforts refresh your soul. Be not anxious as to the event. Assure yourself that you are in the hands of infinite wisdom and mercy. Consider that you are now called to *suffer* the will of your heavenly Father. Pray for strength to submit to his holy pleasure concerning you.

“Perplex not yourself about frames and feelings (in which there is more self-will than you imagine), but be rather solicitous for a meek and lowly submission to the present dispensation, and for patience and willingness to take up the cross. As it hath pleased God to put you into the furnace, I hope you will leave much dross behind, and come forth tried and purified. May our dearest Saviour support you, and make all your bed in your sick-

ness. Depend on seeing me as soon as I am able to go abroad, by which time I trust your recovery will be pretty far advanced. Jenny\* sends you her affectionate remembrances.

“Our best duty waits on your Lady. I hope she will be comforted and supported under her present heavy trial. Lady Selina is, I hope, on the recovery.—I wish Philips would let us know, by a line, how you are. THOMAS JONES.”

Lady Huntingdon's only daughter, Lady Selina Hastings, to whom reference is made in the concluding paragraph, and who died in 1763, was also a sufferer from the same malady, and at the same time. The following note, addressed to Miss Bateman by Lady Huntingdon, bespeaks, no less than the letters already printed, the profound affection with which she regarded her correspondent and protegee.

“FRIDAY AFTERNOON, APRIL 30, 1762.

“MY DEAR BATEMAN.—I long to come and see you, but the doctor thinks there may be danger of bringing additional infection to Lady Selina; and should she have a relapse of the fever, with an eruption, in her weak state it might be of bad consequence. In this situation of mine, I am sure you would not wish to see me; but if you at any time should, I will come the last thing at night, and then I think no danger can arise from it. You must know that you command from my heart all that can be done; and the doctor assures me you have not one symptom that is in the least to be feared. May our dear Lord bless your heart with such a measure of joy, peace, quiet, and assurance, as

\* Mrs. Jones.

may cause you to repose in confidence all your cares upon his tender bosom. I am truly anxious for your real peace and health; but *for* all, and *in* all, I commend you to him who is the friend that fails not, and who will be found yours and mine eternally.

SELINA HUNTINGDON."

"P. S.—Let me know if you want anything, and if you would have me send to let your mother know."

Mr. Jones obtained his immortality on the 6th of June, 1762; his funeral sermon was preached by the Rev. Wm. Romaine. "Dear Mr. Jones," says Lady Huntingdon, "lived happily, and died rejoicing. He was long the subject of affliction, and often at death's door; but he was refined in the furnace of affliction, and his growth in grace and knowledge of the Saviour was great and remarkable." I possess his pocket-book, containing a brief diary for the year of his death. The last entry is on the 25th of May, and is a supplication for the health of his wife who was residing at Canonbury House for the benefit of a change of air. The journal declares how indefatigably he laboured, though bowed down by continual sickness, in the cause of his Divine Master, and how sweetly his humble spirit depended upon that Master for strength and consolation and peace. It commences with a Prayer, of which the following is a copy.

"Through thy great goodness and long-suffering, O my God, am I permitted to see the beginning of another year. It is of thy mercies that I have not been long ago consumed. Oh! let thy goodness lead me to repentance. Make me thankful, I beseech thee, and grant that the life thou

hast spared may be spent to thy glory. Pardon my past sins and unprofitableness, and send down thy Holy Spirit upon me. Guide me into all truth; preserve me from all error; settle my judgment; increase my faith; sanctify me, through thy truth, and lead me in the way of thy commandments. Prepare me for all that lies before me; sanctify every occurrence that is to befall me. Help me to redeem the time, to improve my talents, and to be found watching. Strengthen me for the work of the ministry, and make me useful in my generation.

"Lord Jesus, lift up the light of thy countenance upon me; infuse fresh vigour into my soul; and grant that I may so pass through things temporal, that I may finally lose not the things which are eternal. Amen."

The Rev. Henry Venn, successively Vicar of Huddersfield and Rector of Yelling, lost no time in offering an affectionate condolence to Mr. Jones's afflicted widow. The following letter, dated only six days after the distressing event, will be read with deep interest by all who know and respect the talents, the labours, and the distinguished Christian excellence of the writer. Mrs. Jones, after the death of her husband, resided with her intimate friend Miss Gideon (the sister of Sampson, first Lord Eardley). Miss Gideon is repeatedly mentioned in the letters of Romaine and Venn. Some of Whitefield's are addressed to her.

"HUDDERSFIELD, June 12th, 1762.

"Amongst the many sincere mourners, dear Madam, for your loss, and for the loss of all Mr. Jones's friends, for the loss of his flock; for the loss

of the Church of God, in his removal to the saints in glory, permit *me* to address you, and to pour out my earnest desires that whilst your heart is bleeding through the infinitely painful separation from such a husband, the Lord who gave him to you, and has now taken him to himself, would calm and assuage the tumult in your breast. If there is any consolation in having companions in grief, how much must yours be alleviated by hundreds and thousands who are now in tears, following the dear departed man of God with Elisha's cry, 'O my Father, the chariots and the horsemen of Israel!' If there is support in the thought that the righteous enter into everlasting rest the moment they are absent from the body, how strongly do all those Christian graces which shone in the dear partner of your bed, plead that you should be satisfied at his departure. If distinction and eminence, where all is transporting and glorious, was the highest object of your wishes, and the constant subject of your prayers for dear Mr. Jones whilst he was in the flesh—what reason have you to say now 'it is well,' when you have seen him removed before he was suffered to dishonour his holy profession; after a most visible growth in grace, a more shining conformity to his dear Master's image, and after being made more and more useful in the conversion of sinners, and the edification of the children of God. What an exceeding weight of glory must he bear upon him, whom it pleased the King of kings thus to honour in his Church below. If there is enough to stanch the most violent stream of grief, though flowing from the most deeply afflicted heart, to know that our cross is not the wound of an enemy,

nor the stroke of a cruel one, but an instance of fatherly love and of covenant faithfulness—with what powerful application may you assure yourself, that this cup, however bitter to the taste, shall work for your good, when you remember the change from death to life, from darkness to light, from the curse of the Law to the blessings of the Gospel, experienced in both your hearts, before, long before, you were parted. If it is a reviving consideration that whenever affliction comes it comes expected and prepared for by prayer, by frequently putting God in remembrance of his covenant; what consolation may you, dear Madam, derive from hence in your widowed estate, by calling to mind how many prayers of your own, how many effectual petitions of your dear husband's, are registered, and lie before the throne of grace, that now especially they may be fulfilled in enabling you to rejoice in tribulation, or at least to possess your soul in patience. If the promises of God are fountains of comfort and rocks of support to the children of God; how happy a circumstance, in the midst of your grief, that they are promises which you have already tried, and whose sweetness you have already tasted. If there is in your soul a desire—and oh! how strong is that desire!—to do anything that might give additional pleasure to your dear husband, supposing him now capable of an increase of felicity, it is at this season before you. It is, not to sorrow as those who have no hope; not otherwise to weep than as Jesus wept, when he whom he loved was in his grave. Methinks if anything could for a moment draw down the regard of your dear husband to anything



so little as what pertains to earth, it would be to address yourself in some such words as these : ' Weep not immoderately for me, thou child of God. I am, I have, all your affection could wish for me, all my immortal soul can receive. I am possessed of the unsearchable riches of Christ, which I was allowed to display in the work of my ministry. Haste to come and partake of the same glory. Let patience have its perfect work. Faint not under the cross, and yours also shall be the crown of glory !'

" May the God of hope, of patience, and of all consolation be your helper now, and the lifter up of your head. May he hear the prayers of those who think upon the prophet's widow, and bear your sorrows on their hearts. May he give you to feel his love, and long for his appearance ; that what seems at first view so grievous, may in the issue add both weight and brightness to the glory which shall be your portion.

" My wife, who is now ill, joins with me in these my prayers ; and, wishing you all the supports which God promises to his people, I am, with real sympathy for your affliction, yours, in all Christian love.

HENRY VENN."

From communications which I have had an opportunity of inspecting, Mr. Adams, (Mrs. Housman's father) appears to have been a man of more than ordinary attainments in Christian knowledge and Christian practice. In a letter to one of her children, written in 1834, his daughter, to whom a packet of his letters had been bequeathed by a sister-in-law, mentions him in the following affectionate and grateful terms. " I have received my

father's letters. Both yesterday and to-day I have nearly blinded myself with reading them. The hand is rather small ; the paper nearly worn out ; the ink faded ;—but even in their mutilated state, they have afforded me unspeakable pleasure. Oh, what a privilege to have had *such* a father ! Every letter breathes a prayer for the spiritual welfare of the child he was addressing ; and though I was too young for him to correspond with me, I doubt not I had his prayers that I might be a participant in the blessings he implored for the elder branches of the family. And you, my dear Agnes, may likewise be a sharer : since there is a promise for good to the children's children of the righteous." The character of Mr. Adams is further indicated in some letters addressed to him by Mr. Berridge. These letters, now published for the first time, are possessed of more than a mere biographical interest. They bear the infallible marks of the writer's strong but eccentric genius : and, notwithstanding a few oddities, reminding one of "the fool's cap," are well worth preserving.

"EVERTON, August 21, 1765.

"DEAR SIR.—Your brother was so kind as to call upon me, and I would not let him depart without a token of my love for you. Such as it is you have it now in your hands ; a pepper-corn payment, bringing you little, but wishing you much, even grace, mercy, and peace, with a daily increase of them, both to yourself and your new partner. I wish you both joy, yea much joy, but all in the Lord. Perhaps you do not know that you have married my sister. Indeed she is as like me as if we had been born of one mother. Well—you are

married into a good family, but, I trust, adopted into a better; and though you have given your hand to my sister Bateman, I hope your heart, as well as hers, is given to my Lord Jesus. Remember who is your master, who, with all the tenderness of a Father, says—‘Son, give me thy heart.’ Love *him* above all, and *her* as yourself. If your family should increase, I hope that will not induce you to enlarge your business immoderately. The cares of the world are as fatal as its pleasures. The former, like cancers, eat up the heart; the latter, like Syrens, bewitch it. You will remember for what purpose labour was appointed:—not for the sake of thriving, but of eating: ‘In the sweat of thy face shalt thou *eat bread*.’ And ‘they that will be rich’ (are willing, are desirous to be rich, trade with this view, though ever so honestly) ‘fall into many snares.’ Labouring for bread to eat is part of the curse: therefore make it not a greater curse than God intended.

“Mr. Janson is with you, I hear, or near you; pray tell him I shall be glad to see him on his return, and that I do expect him some Saturday, to stay at least till the Monday following.

“JOHN BERRIDGE.”

The next was written when Mr. Berridge was suffering from severe indisposition. In a letter dated in the same year, Mr. Venn says—“Summer differs not more from winter than this dear man from what he was ten years ago:—he is now broken in heart, yet fervent in spirit.”

“EVERTON, June 3, 1771.

“DEAR SIR,—I received your letter, and thank you for your kind invitation. I am glad your zeal for

Christ and his Gospel continues; may it increase more and more. My desire is still to go out as usual; but alas, I am become a mere broken vessel. This time three years I was seized with a high fever, which laid me up for five months; this was succeeded by a nervous fever, which has hung on me ever since. In the winter I am somewhat braced, and can make a poor shift to preach on the Sabbath, but nothing more. As soon as the hot weather comes in, I am fit for nothing but to sigh and yawn. Last summer I did not preach for four months. I feel myself now growing very feeble; and how much longer I shall be able to preach I know not. My breast is so weak that I can bear very little exercise of walking or riding, and I am so tender that I cannot stir out of doors in summer without a cloak, when there is a wind. My disorder is nearly the same with dear Mr. Whitefield's, and from tokens received I expect to continue in this state for two years longer. Do think of me, dear sir, daily, and beg of God to strengthen me to preach on the Sabbath. The Lord gave me notice of this sickness nine months before it came, following me first with these words, "Thou shalt be dumb for a season," and then with these words, "Thou must have fellowship with Christ in his sufferings." Well, Lord, be it so; only grant me patience, a resigned will, and a sanctified rod. I find we know but little of ourselves, and gain but little of the Gospel broken heart, till we have been emptied from vessel to vessel, or fried like a cake in a pan, and turned a hundred times over. Our malignant humours lie hid in the sunshine, and squat like toads under a tile; but when David's

iron harrows are drawn over our Ammonitish backs again and again, then the toads will spit and swell.

"I wish you and Mrs. Adams much joy in the Lord. May Jesus bless you, and keep you, and lift up the light of his countenance on you, and on your affectionate servant, JOHN BERRIDGE."

Two years later, Mr. Adams received the following characteristic epistle from the same writer.

"EVERTON, June 9th, 1773.

"DEAR SIR,—I received a very kind letter from you about a twelvemonth ago. 'Aye,' says Mrs. Adams, 'so you did, and it is a shame for you not to answer it sooner. If I had the care of you, I would teach you better manners.' Indeed, if any one could help me, I believe Mrs. Adams might, for she has both sense and spirit, and has long been a great favourite with the Vicar of Everton. But, alas ! the Vicar is grown grey and very vapourish ; and old asses, though they have long ears, are very hard of hearing.

"When your letter came to hand I was deep in the suds, and continued so for five months ; during which time I did not stir out of my parish, and could not bear the thoughts of writing. As the winter drew on I grew better, and might have written ; but then shame prevented me. So I threw your letter into the fire, that it might not reproach me. At length, Thomas Clark, an old Nottinghamshire friend, comes up to Everton, and I determined to write (better late than never), and retrieve my character if possible. Pray tell Mrs. Adams I am very sensible of my fault, and ask pardon, and hope to do better another time. And let her know that I am become a Moderate Calvinist.

"My health, through mercy, is much better than it has been for five years; and I now retain some hope of visiting your parts again, but not this summer. If my body groweth able to endure the journey, and the clergyman you mentioned continues willing to exchange churches, I may yet see Ashby. Pray give my kind love to him.

"I hope, the older you grow, the more you become sensible of your vileness, and lay your mouth lower in the dust. The more grace you have, and the holier you are, the viler you will be in your own eyes. Mercy will be your pleasant food and song, and a Gospel broken heart your sweet companion. Young pilgrims are often soaring to the moon, and talking much of their own graces; but an old traveller drops into the dust, and sings Hosannahs unto Jesus. JOHN BERRIDGE."\*

Upon the occasion of Mr. Adam's death, Lady Huntingdon addressed to his widow a letter of affectionate condolence.

"LONDON, Spa-fields, May 26, 1779.

"MY DEAREST MRS. ADAMS.—The intelligence received last night by a letter from Mr. Glazebrook, made me deeply enter, as a faithful sympathizer, into your personal affliction. I have often trod this painful road; nor is the recollection of it otherwise than serene. Had I but profited more by a wise father's correction, I should have become a more obedient child. It has, however, enabled me to be a tender sharer in the tears of the widow and the fatherless; and with you, from the love I have ever borne you, I am doubly afflicted. I had reason to

\* The original of this letter is in the possession of Dr. Raffles, to whose kindness I am indebted for the copy now printed.

dread this event for you, when you probably thought it remote. It is now over, and cannot be recalled. Regard it as the best proof that could be given of God's love to him who is removed from earth to heaven. The exchange we ought to live for; and for it alone. Let us more ardently pursue the blessed and glorious objects before us. The only way to be eternally wise, and temporally happy, is to be securing that blissful eternity which knows nothing of loss, affliction, or distress.

"I long to know your situation, and all your future prospects. At present I can only feel for your aching heart and your many tears. Oblige me with your friendship and your confidence under these bitter circumstances; but make Christ your chief confidant. He is the creator of our souls, and the husband of them. He is the Lord of Hosts, and commands legions to guard and comfort us, and watch all our sorrows with unceasing love and unerring wisdom. Let but faith have its full exercise, and victory will be yours. You will be more than conqueror.

"I desire all that is kind to Mr. Glazebrook. I will write the first minute I have time; but first of all I shall long for you to tell me that you find a father's holy arm supporting you. I know you hate writing; but for once relieve my mind, and tell me how you do. SELINA HUNTINGDON."

It appears that Mrs. Adams in her answer had evidenced a want of that entire submission and self-renunciation which afflictions are so beautifully designed to produce in those to whom the religion of Jesus is life and light. Anything less than a *complete* casting of *all* cares upon him who careth for

us, argues undoubtedly an imperfect and perhaps a precarious dependence; and, in a great majority of cases, indicates, as Lady Huntingdon well observes in her reply, an unsubdued condition of the "old legal heart." Her ladyship, however, makes no allowance for the peculiarities of constitutional temperament; and yet she knew Mrs. Adams too intimately not to be aware that in *her*, a more than usually strong understanding was united with a more than ordinary proneness to desponding fear.

"MY DEAREST MRS. ADAMS.—You were very kind to satisfy my great anxiety about you. I never fear the Lord's care of you as the most faithful and honest creature living, as to this world; but I do long to hear that your precious soul is more and more alive to the glories purchased by the dear Lamb of God for your eternal blessedness. Oh! let your *heart* turn to this Lord of life and glory, and all that veil of legal hope and fear will be taken away, and you will behold the glory that shall change you into his divine image. Give him your children, and he will bless them as *he* esteems blessings. Continue as a widow indeed, in supplications night and day. Break through, my dear friend, and cleave only to the Lord with full purpose of heart. Let him lead, bless, and guide you into all his wisdom, righteousness and separation from this world, and eternal redemption in his kingdom of peace and joy. When I look at these privileges, and find you are cold and careless about them, oh! how am I grieved in heart and spirit! I know that could I have a voice from the dead it would be to encourage me to pursue you with all entreaties, and every alarming thought, for your safety, and enjoyment



of these spiritual blessings. Oh ! that the Lord, would but bless my poor wretched words, wishes, and prayers, for this happy purpose ! Your old legal heart remains unsubdued. You will not let the King of glory in, lest he should not find you as good as you think you are. You can't trust his faithfulness or his power. Oh ! forsake all, and embrace the Son of God, for all purposes of good, either in heaven or on earth. Till then you never, never can be happy. I do beg you to remember this.

“SELINA HUNTINGDON.”

The history of Mr. Glazebrook, whose name occurs in the first of these two letters, is remarkable, and will be found at some length in the Memoirs of the Countess. He was the first fruit of Mr. Fletcher's apostolic labours at Madeley, and probably the first candidate proposed for education at the College at Trevecca. Having itinerated for some time, and with great success, as one of the Lady Huntingdon's preachers, he obtained orders in the Established Church ; and in 1779, after serving several curacies, one of which was in Leicestershire, settled at Warrington as Incumbent of St. James's, Latchford. Subsequently, on the presentation of Lord Moira, he became Vicar of Belton in Leicestershire, where he died. He was the author of various publications of considerable merit.

Between Mr. Glazebrook's family and that of Mrs. Adams, the closest intimacy subsisted. “Your dear father,” says Mrs. Housman, writing in 1827 to his only surviving daughter, Mrs. Rylands, the wife of John Rylands, Esq., of Warrington, “was loved by me *as a father*, both before and after my real parent was removed from this vale of tears ;

and his offspring have ever appeared to me as *kindred* rather than common friends." Mr. Glazebrook's regard for Mrs. Housman was not less profound. Addressing her soon after her marriage, he thus writes : " My connexion for so long a time with your family, my having nursed and dandled you when a child, and felt for you the affection of a father rather than that of a friend ever since, have never suffered me to hear with indifference anything which concerned you, and especially a circumstance of such magnitude as that of a union for life. How it will be, should the trial ever come, I know not ; but at present I can truly say that I scarcely think it possible for me to feel myself more interested in the marriage of either of my own daughters." A little further on, having playfully commented upon Mrs. Housman's enthusiastic opinion of her husband, of whom, however, he says " he had received equally pleasing accounts from other quarters," Mr. Glazebrook proceeds to express a wish which was amply realized even before he entered upon his rest. " Rallying apart," he says, " if there is a wish near my heart, it is this—that the Lord may abundantly bless you *to* and *with* each other, making you truly help-meets for each other, and instruments of much good to the church of God."

Surrounded by such influences, it is not surprising that Mrs. Housman at an early age submitted her whole being—body, soul, and spirit—to the exclusive control and guidance of religious principles ;—the wonder would have been if she had not. Among her papers I have found a " Solemn Covenant and Self-Dedication to God," composed in her

nineteenth year; it bears her seal, is formally subscribed by her own hand, and is dated the 3d of February, 1837, exactly fifty years after she had deliberately consecrated her life and energies to the service of her Maker, she was carried to the grave. The conclusion of the document is as follows.

"If any should see this my Covenant with Thee, O God, may they make the engagement their own; willingly resigning themselves to thee; and do Thou graciously accept them, and let them be partakers of *Thy* Covenant, through Jesus the Mediator of it. Hear this, my prayer, O God, for myself and for others, and keep me under Thy guidance. Guide me in all things. Be my Helper in dangers; my Deliverer in temptations; my Comforter in afflictions; my Strength in weakness; my All in All, through life, and in death.

"Thou art witness, O God, with myself, that I this day vow to be thine; resolving, in *Thy* strength, to live henceforth unto thee. I sign this my surrender with mine own hand; I seal it with mine own seal; and may the Lord of Hosts, the God of Israel, help me to fulfil the same."\*

\* "Solid advantages, I believe," said Mr. Housman, forty-three years later, "have been found in every age of the Church by covenanting with God; and if this be done under a due sense of weakness in ourselves, and under a strong reliance on the grace that is in Christ Jesus, to enable us to stand to the Covenant, I can have no doubt that the solemn transaction will be blessed. We shall remember, if we be tempted to start aside from the terms of our engagement, that the vows of God are upon us. The recollection, in the hour of trial, may excite a seasonable and godly fear in our souls, and keep us in the way everlasting. Let us, then, with simplicity and godly sincerity, and with much prayer for light and strength from the Lord, solemnly covenant with our God for two things;—first, that we will daily be receiving, with thankful hearts, the redemption there is in Christ Jesus; and, secondly,

To be duly appreciated, Mrs. Housman, like many others of sterling worth, required to be intimately known. By those who knew her but slightly, she was often misunderstood, and accordingly underrated; by those who enjoyed her confidence, she was not less warmly beloved than ardently admired. As a wife, she was attentive and affectionate; as a mother, full of the tenderest and most enduring attachment; as a friend, earnest, steady, and disinterested. A sincerer, more benevolent, more truly humble and fervent Christian, never breathed. Her life was a uniform course of practical piety, ever active, ever self-denying. An opportunity of good assumed in her eyes the authority of a command to undertake the service. From morning to night, the year through, she was about her Father's business, performing her labours of love in a spirit of entire devoutment to the will of heaven, and of implicit dependence upon divine aid. A quick imagination, great candour of heart and mind, uncompromising honesty of purpose, and determined will to execute it, fitted her, in a very uncommon degree, for the discharge of her numerous, self-incurred, and often harassing engagements; whilst a more than ordinary skill in discriminating minute and subtle differences of character, and in piercing the disguises of a hollow and treacherous world, protected her from the various artifices to which religious people (who can-

that through his grace enabling us, we will daily walk by that lovely rule of Christian kindness given to the Colossians, chap. iii. 12—15. This will be to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things; and may the God of love and peace so be with us, that it may be found written in the book of his remembrance at the last day, 'And they stood to the covenant.' "

not always boast the serpent's wisdom,) are so peculiarly exposed. To Mr. Housman, in his ministerial capacity, she proved invaluable. Profoundly respecting her principles, her understanding, and her judgment, he proposed to her all his doubts, and consulted her in all his difficulties; and without her sanction he did nothing. She possessed great influence over his mind, and exerted it, with unrelaxing consistency, to the glory of God and the happiness of men. How immensely the cause of pure and undefiled religion is indebted to the energetic instrumentality of this admirable woman, will be proclaimed with honour when the Lord Jehovah maketh up his jewels.

The leaven of pharisaical bitterness is not soon exhausted; and Mr. Housman had frequent opportunities of witnessing its uncharitable operations. During the nine years that elapsed between his departure from Lancaster and his final settlement there in 1795, he paid repeated visits to his family and friends. Upon these occasions, the pulpits of the Established Church, as well in the neighbourhood as in the town itself, were pertinaciously closed against him. The clergy of that day, however widely they might differ on some points, united to discountenance, and if possible, to discourage, what they were pleased to call the "wild" and "methodistical" views of one who presumptuously denied the meritorious efficacy of human works; who preached, after the manner of Paul, justification by faith alone; and who enforced, with a zeal and fervour which alarmed by their novelty, the absolute and unavoidable necessity of *spiritual* regeneration. "It hath been observed,"

says Dr. Witherspoon in his celebrated Essays, "that it is somewhat natural for clergymen to be more easily irritable at such of their brethren as rise *above* them in apparent concern for religion, and zeal for promoting it, than at those who fall *below* them. The first are a reproach to their own conduct and character; the other are a foil to it. So that every one, who espouses any bold or vigorous measures, may lay his account with a sensible coldness, even from such of his brethren as are in the next immediate degree below him." Mr. Housman bitterly felt the cruelty and the hardship of this unrelenting exclusion. At length, on one of his last occasional visits to Lancaster, his old tutor, the Rev. Mr. Watson, Chaplain to the County Jail, at the intercession of a mutual friend, fearlessly broke through the clerical combination, and admitted him to the Castle pulpit. Here he frequently preached, and here he effected considerable good. By the manifestation of the truth he commended himself to the consciences of those whom the violated laws of their country had consigned to an awful and ignominious destiny; and in a great number of instances became the honoured instrument of turning them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God. In after years, under the pressing sense of the importance of the duty, he devoted much time to the unhappy inmates of the County Jail; diligently instructing them in the principles of religion; praying *with* them, and *for* them, and teaching *them* to pray; and directing their awakened faith to the Hope of Israel, who came to preach glad tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim

deliverance to the captives, the recovery of sight to the blind, and the opening of the prison to those that are bound.

In the year 1792, Mr. Housman undertook the afternoon lecture at the large and ancient church of St. Martin, Leicester. "This service," says the Rev. Thomas Webster,\* to whom I am obliged for the information, "is usually supplied by the Confrater or Chaplain of Wigston's Hospital in that town; and the then Confrater, the Rev. Thomas Ludlam, being of infirm health and advanced in years, had solicited the Rev. Mr. Robinson to procure for him a suitable assistant. A more judicious choice could scarcely have been made." "Mr. Housman was then," continues Mr. Webster, "in the prime and flower of his days. His sentiments were decidedly accordant with those of our Church, his style was eloquent, and his mode of delivery highly impressive; though his voice was scarcely equal to the immense church in which he was called to labour.† Here, however, he was attended by a numerous and highly respectable congregation."

The alarming symptoms of consumption which had occasioned his retirement from Markfield having now subsided, he became Mr. Ludlam's curate at Foston, a small village seven miles from Leicester, the living being annexed to St. Martin's. To his new cure, which had only one service, he used to walk every Sunday morning, and, having done the duty, walk back again to preach at St. Mar-

\* Vicar of Oakington, Rector of St. Botolph's, and late Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge.

† In a letter to me, Mr. Webster says—"He used to express a wish that he had Mr. Scott's lungs, who, though asthmatic, could be heard without difficulty at St. Mary's."

tin's. He was greatly beloved at Foston; and I am informed, on the authority of a very old woman who lived in the same house with him as Mrs. Adams's maid, that many of the villagers, deeply impressed by his affectionate and faithful ministrations, made a point of regularly repairing to Leicester to hear him in an afternoon.

The Rev. Thomas Ludlam was the author of several works which commanded attention in their day.\* A few years previous to the publication of his "Four Essays on the ordinary and extraordinary operations of the Holy Spirit," a friendly correspondence took place between him and Mr. Housman on the subject. Of this correspondence, which appears to have been begun by Mr. Housman, probably in consequence of some conversational discussion of the points at issue, the following interesting letter is the only relic in my possession.

"DEAR SIR,—If, after the perusal of the papers which I took the liberty of putting into your hands, you do not know what I mean, I despair, by any subsequent declaration, of making myself understood. After proving from Scripture the *reality* of Divine Illumination, I proceeded to state, as explicitly as I knew how, its *nature*. But that I may not appear to shrink from a full discussion of the subject, I will endeavour to return 'a clear answer' to the proposed queries.

"I. 'Does the illumination you suppose convey knowledge to the mind, without the intervention of human means?'

"That this is sometimes the case there can be no

\* Copious accounts of Mr. Ludlam will be found in Vaughan's Life of Robinson of Leicester.



doubt. Colonel Gardiner, while waiting for the moment of assignation when he might indulge in adulterous commerce, had instantaneously such clear and affecting perceptions of Divine purity and justice, as threw him upon his knees to adore these glorious perfections in God, though he expected every moment to be cast down to hell.\* These new perceptions of the character of God, accompanied by correspondent affections, and succeeded by a holy consistency of conduct, would restrain, one might imagine, even an avowed infidel to cry out, "ALL this" (both the light first communicated, and the moral change effected) "ALL this hath God wrought, without the intervention of human means. But, generally speaking, the enlightening agency of the Spirit must be prayed for and expected, while we consult and meditate upon the *written*, or attend upon the *preached*, word of God. So David, while perusing the Scriptures, breathed out his supplications, "Open thou mine eyes," &c.

“II. Does this illumination convey such knowledge as men *cannot* acquire by the use of their natural faculties?”

“Most certainly. A merely natural, or, if you please, an animal or sensual man, may be convinced that certain doctrines are contained in the Bible, as well as that certain facts are recorded there. For instance: he may be persuaded that the goodness of God, the atonement of Christ, the influences of the Spirit, &c., are doctrines which the Bible contains, and he may talk about and defend these doctrines with ingenuity and zeal; and all

\* See the Life of Colonel Gardiner, by Dr. Doddridge.

this knowledge may be acquired by the use of the natural faculties. The man who goes no further than this, will 'hold the truth in unrighteousness.' But the intrinsic nature, properties, excellences, or glory, of these truths, must be *spiritually discerned* (1. Cor. ii. 14.); yea, they can *only* be discerned by the enlightening agency of the Holy Ghost. The views *thus* obtained, are transforming, (2 Cor. iii. 18). It is Deity *alone*, if an apostle may be credited, who can '*shine into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the GLORY OF GOD in the face of Jesus Christ.*' It is 'an unction from the Holy One' which *thus* teacheth. (1 John ii. 20. 27.)

"III. 'Do the persons to whom this illumination is vouchsafed, know the *precise truths* which are *thus* conveyed, from those which are acquired by the ordinary means appointed for the attainment of it?'

"Is not this query intended as a puzzle? It is certainly enveloped in darkness. If I understand anything at all of the grammatical construction of sentences, the pronoun 'it' refers to, and is put for, 'illumination.' Substitute, then, this word, and see how the whole will read. 'Do the persons to whom this illumination is vouchsafed, know the *precise truths* which are *thus* conveyed, from those which are acquired by the ordinary means appointed for the attainment of illumination?' As the sentence is altogether unintelligible, at least to me, I must be content to pass over it.

"IV. 'Do the persons to whom knowledge is thus conveyed, know at what *precise time* such knowledge is conveyed to them?'

“Colonel Gardiner knew *the precise time*. But, to speak generally ;—if a man knows and feels the doctrine of original or birth-sin, as our article expresses it ; if he knows and feels that this sin has pervaded every faculty, has blinded the understanding, as well as corrupted the heart ; if he knows, from many a fruitless experiment, that he can neither sanctify the latter nor enlighten the former ; and if, while waiting upon God in the ways of his appointment, he has such views of his *glory* as excite reverence, admiration, and love ; such views of *the excellency and loveliness of the Saviour* (Cantic. v. 16), as lead to dependence, gratitude, peace, and joy ; such views of the evil and hatefulness of sin, as make him ‘abhor himself, and repent in dust and ashes ;’ the conclusion is obvious—he may and does know the precise time, &c. In less favoured seasons, the spiritual light he receives may be so faint *in degree*, and the darkness of his own mind so great and oppressive, that he may be only able to say with the apostle (though upon a very different occasion), ‘*I think also that I have the Spirit of God.*’

“V. ‘Do all illuminated persons *agree precisely* in the truths so conveyed ?’

“Divine teaching, generally speaking, is analogous to other operations of God : that is, it is *progressive*. The *babe* in Christ may only have very faint perceptions of Gospel truths. He has seen so much of sin as to be humbled before his God, and so much of the Redeemer as to fly for refuge to the hope set before him. He is then in a state of safety. As he goes on towards his eternal home, he will, if humble, diligent, and faithful to light

received, see more *clearly* what he has already seen *truly*; and he will make fresh discoveries. Darkness will become light before him, and crooked things straight. He will, to use a very plain metaphor, be removed from form to form in the school of Christ. If, then, there be different degrees of advancement in divine knowledge, even in the same person at different times, there may be expected to be (*a fortiori*) different degrees of advancement *in different persons*. The 'Spirit of Truth' will not and cannot, in his operations, *contradict* himself; but he may and does bestow his blessings, ordinary as well as extraordinary, upon 'every man, severally as he will.' Sooner or later, all who are 'taught of God' will *agree precisely* in three particulars. They will be reprov'd, or convinc'd, of sin (John xvi. 8.) They will *know*, and have exalted views of the Saviour, (1 John v. 20; Ephes. i. 17; John vi. 44; John xvi. 14—this promise was not made exclusively to the apostles; Christ's disciples were of the number of those who were addressed.) They will know, and have high and honourable thoughts of the character of God, (Heb. viii. 11; 2 Cor. iv. 6.)

It is nowhere *promised* that the Holy Spirit will teach us whether adult or infant baptism, whether sitting or kneeling at the Sacrament, whether this or the other form of Church Government, be most agreeable to the will of God. These points, and various others which might be mentioned, relate only to the *externals* of religion; but humility, faith, love, gratitude, (or, in other words, the very life and existence of religion in the soul,) depending upon a proper knowledge of *Sin, Christ*, and

*the character of God*, the perception of these, by the agency of the Spirit, is *particularly promised*, and experienced by all true Christians. I don't say, and I don't think, that the three particulars alluded to are the *only* points in which Christians of a long standing in the school of Christ are *perfectly agreed*; but, as I have spoken sufficiently in answer to the query, I need not proceed.

"VI. 'Is there any difference between *this* illumination, and the *inspiration* vouchsafed to the apostles?'

"As I have stated my views, fairly and explicitly, upon the subject of Illumination by the Spirit (as it respects *private Christians*,) and as the nature or extent of the inspiration vouchsafed to the apostles forms no part of our inquiry, I decline answering the query. I decline it, not because of any difficulty in the case, but because the question is altogether irrelevant. We will, if you please, keep closely to the point, and exclude all extraneous matter. We will inquire,

"1. Whether there be such a thing as illumination by the Spirit. And,

"2. If there be, what is the nature of this illumination?

"The positive proofs which I have brought from the Bible in favour of my sentiments, will, I trust, be fully considered *seriatim*; and if I am wrong, my errors will be pointed out by the usual rules of fair and candid criticism. ROBERT HOUSMAN."

"P. S.—As I have not a copy of what I send, I will thank you to return these papers when you have done with them."

This letter is consistent with all his after views.

Throughout life he laid great stress upon the office of the Holy Ghost as a perpetually ordained *revealer* of the things of Christ—regarding the point, not as one of mere speculative curiosity, properly belonging to a former age, but as one of practical moment, directly bearing upon the question of personal holiness, in all its various departments and modes of manifestation. To the agency of the Holy Spirit in bestowing the faculty of a just and true contemplation of the objects of revelation—in giving power to discern what has been already presented for discernment—Mr. Housman was constantly referring. “The Holy Ghost,” he says, in a letter to his daughter, Mrs. Prichard, in 1824, “reveals no *new* truths; he opens the understanding to behold the importance and excellence of what is already revealed;”—and some years previous, in a sermon on the Influences of the Holy Spirit, the necessity of an application of those influences to the understanding, without exception of intellectual or educational differences and distinctions, is thus explicitly declared.

“The Word of God is clear and full in all its doctrines, motives, encouragements, and precepts. Everything necessary to salvation is there revealed; and the revelation is so humbling, holy, and glorious, as to prove its author to be God. But the mind, by nature, is in a state of blindness. The objects are presented before it, but it wants the power of perception: “there is none that understandeth.” The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not. ‘The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, but they are foolishness unto him; neither can he

know them, *because they are spiritually discerned.*' The former part of this Scripture teaches us our total ignorance by nature; the latter part proclaims the remedy which is provided of God. It is the Holy Spirit which removes the veil from the mind, and which enlightens it to perceive the truth, value, and excellence, of the salvation of God. Human abilities and human learning, though in other respects useful, are here of no avail. The unlearned man and the philosopher are exactly upon a level. Each of them, by nature, knows not the Lord; but both of them, if both alike are taught of God, have the same views of his glory, of the sinfulness of sin, of the love and redemption of Jesus, of the beauty of holiness, of the insufficiency of all earthly things to form the happiness of the soul, and of the all-sufficiency of the blessing and presence of a reconciled God."

In 1792 Mr. Housman preached a series of sermons, I believe in the Church of St. Martin, upon select names and titles ascribed in the Word of God to Jesus Christ. They were published in a neat volume in the year 1793, by Messrs. Scatcherd and Whitaker, Ave Maria Lane, London, and were intended, I presume, since the title-page bears the designation of Vol. I. to be succeeded by a second. It was probably owing to his retirement from Leicester, shortly after the publication of these discourses, and to the numerous engagements consequent upon his residence in Lancaster, that the continuation of the work was arrested.

Immediately before this event, and indeed whilst preparing for it, he preached an eloquent sermon on the principles and extent of Christian benevo-

lence, before the Governors of the Leicester Infirmary and Lunatic Asylum, at their Anniversary Meeting, September, 1794. For this discourse, upon the composition of which he seems to have bestowed peculiar care, and with eminent success, the thanks of the Governors, among whom were some of the most influential characters in the county, were voted; the motion for this deserved and gratifying testimony of approbation, which was formally transmitted to Mr. Housman by the Secretary, being made by the learned and reverend Archdeacon of Leicester. The sermon was published in quarto, by Matthews of the Strand, and by Scatcherd and Whitaker, of Ave-Maria Lane, London, and was dedicated to the Earl of Stamford, the President, to the Vice-Presidents, the Bishop of Peterborough, the Visitor, and to the Governors of the Institution, in behalf of which it had been delivered. It afterwards obtained the commendation of his Diocesan, the celebrated Bishop Tomline. To these facts Mr. Housman felt himself constrained to allude, in a publication which will be found in a succeeding page, when assailed, a few months later, by the calumnies of his native town.

Writing to an attached and valued friend, in 1823, he observes;—"A poor sparrow cannot fall without divine permission; nor can a sermon upon Gospel principles, be preached, but at the right time, and to the right persons." His own individual experience seemed to justify the conviction. His ministry abounded with instances respecting which it might be said, without the slightest tincture of superstition or fanaticism, "Behold what God hath



wrought!" I remember one of a remarkable nature. At the close of a sermon which he had been delivering in St. Mary's, two persons, a man and a woman, lingered in the church after the rest of the congregation had departed, and, evidently, under the influence of extreme mental anguish, besought him to favour them with a few minutes conversation. For many years they had tried the merciful patience of their Maker by persisting in a course of most profligate adultery; but incidentally stepping into St. Mary's, the words of the preacher, as he solemnly reasoned of righteousness, and temperance, and judgment to come, suddenly convicted them of sin; they were pricked to the heart; their iniquity appeared intolerable; and, stung by the sense of their great transgressions, they resolved to separate that very day, and to turn unto the Lord. Their penitence so strikingly awakened, was sincere; they renounced their vices; they sought pardon and grace, through fervent and persevering prayer; the chain which had tied and bound them gave way; they became new creatures, and walked in newness of "life, adorning the doctrine of God their Saviour in all things."

The history of Susan Ward, already adverted to, presents another instance, and a very interesting one, of the efficacious instrumentality of Mr. Housman's ministerial exhortations, in suddenly removing ignorance the most profound, and informing with light and loveliness the dark and desolate mind. Whilst taking a morning walk in the picturesque vicinity of Langton, he beheld this poor woman sitting under a hedge near a sheep-fold, inhaling, for the supposed benefit of her health, the pure and

pleasant breath of the sheep. Seeing that she was suffering under the influence of a somewhat rapid consumption, he opened a conversation, and introduced, by natural and imperceptible transition, the solemn object that lay so near his heart. The ignorance of Susan Ward was deplorable; she scarcely knew that she possessed a soul, and of course knew nothing of the evil of sin or the glory of salvation. Her debility, from indisposition, was extreme; she was unable, without great difficulty, succeeded by corresponding exhaustion, to bear a part in conversation; and a man whose faith was weaker than Mr. Housman's, would have regarded her case as absolutely hopeless. But with God all things are possible. His word, like a hammer, breaketh the hard rock in pieces, and sometimes at a single blow. The wretched invalid was entreated to pray that God would teach her; and that most encouraging promise, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him," was presented, again and again, to her notice. Susan had listened with deep attention to all that she had heard, and was enabled to pray for divine assistance. "Her petitions," continues the unpretending narrative which commemorates her short but profitable story, "were answered. She discovered all she wanted. The Lord appears to have enlightened her mind in an unusual degree; compassionating her as she lay on the borders of eternity." In about six weeks, during which she was repeatedly visited by the friend whom a kind and ever watchful Providence had raised up in her season of need, she spoke on religious subjects, like one who had been acquainted

with them for years; and Mr. Housman has often been heard to declare, both in public and private, that from the lips of this poor, uneducated, dying woman, so lately in a state of awful spiritual insensibility, he received some of the most precious instructions of his life. "She could discourse," it is thus he writes of her, "with a knowledge and a feeling concerning redemption, which were both affecting and astonishing. A delightful savour of godliness ran through all she said. A heavenly glow of peace and love beamed upon her countenance. Her eyes had seen the salvation of God, and she was anxious and eager that those around her should likewise behold the 'great sight.' In a word 'she was born again,' and all the graces of the new creature appeared and triumphed in her experience." Almost the last words she uttered were in reference to the honoured instrument of her conversion. "Give my love to him," she exclaimed, "and tell him I shall meet him in heaven. Oh! thank him for all he has done for me."

In Leicestershire, we have seen, Mr. Housman had acquired a solid reputation, and was accomplishing great good. At Langton, notwithstanding a little opposition at first, his labours, had been owned of God; in the churches of St. Mary and St. Martin he had preached successfully to immense congregations; Markfield, though an unpromising sphere of exertion, exhibited ample evidences of the efficiency of his ministrations; and at Foston, the work of salvation was prospering under his hands. More than this, and what to some men would have been better, his society was courted and appreciated by the powerful and the rich, and fair prospects of

preferment opened before him. But an entire change of circumstance and situation drew nigh. The attachment he had invariably felt for his native place, seemed to be deepened and strengthened during a visit which his wife and he paid in the summer of 1794 to his parents; to the aid of this attachment came the melancholy sense of the gross spiritual darkness in which its inhabitants lay; and he determined, not without much deliberation and many fervent prayers, to abandon the beloved scene of his labours in the south, to build a church of his own in Lancaster, and to preach in it himself. The idea of this bold and benevolent design was first conceived by Mrs. Housman, on the morning of their departure from Lune Bank, as they stopped upon the highest part of The Greaves to take a final look at the picturesque town and the magnificent landscape that formed its background. Eager to realize a project which he believed the Almighty had sanctioned and blessed, he made immediate arrangements for leaving Leicester; revisited his parents at the close of that year, with a view of carrying his undertaking into effect; and in the autumn of the ensuing year (1795) took up his permanent residence in Lancaster, at one of the houses at the eastern end of the New Bridge.

The Bishop of the Diocese, Dr. Cleaver, and the Vicar of Lancaster, Mr. White, having signified, in the politest terms, their approbation of Mr. Housman's design of building a new Church—on the 19th of December, 1794, printed proposals were issued for the erection of St. Anne's. The hostility so uncharitably exhibited against him on the publication of his sermon on the principal doctrines of

the Gospel, assumed a more threatening and formidable aspect at this important juncture. A meeting which consisted of most of the wealthy and influential inhabitants of Lancaster, was held in the Town Hall, on the 1st of January, in the succeeding year, for the purpose of considering the propriety of building within the township, notoriously in opposition to Mr. Housman's, a new Church or Chapel, of which the curate of the parish church, the Rev. Wm. Colton, A. M., was intended to be the first minister. In pursuance of a resolution passed at this meeting, a subscription was opened to promote its general object; and at another meeting, held on the 7th of the same month, and in the same place, the Committee reported that the unexpectedly large sum of four thousand two hundred pounds had been subscribed already. Such was the zeal of our forefathers in opposing evangelical religion.

Though naturally a timid and retiring man, Mr. Housman possessed a large amount of moral courage, and was unflinching in a good cause. Intrepidity was as much a part of his character as meekness: in fact *real* meekness, which is Christian principle in a state of repose, *implies* intrepidity. Nothing could daunt him when he felt that he was right. These unholy tactics, accordingly, neither disheartened nor dismayed him. His face was made strong against the faces of his adversaries, and his forehead strong against theirs. *His* project was not a thing of a week. Having been deliberately considered, and repeatedly commended to divine favour in earnest and believing prayer, it was but little likely to be superseded by a scheme

which began in bitterness and was continued in spite. He knew whom he trusted. His enemies, meanwhile, with determined pertinacity, did their worst. Vituperation, a ready and an easy argument, was resorted to. On the one hand, his doctrines were pronounced to be of antinomian tendency; on the other he was accused of carrying holiness to a needless extent. The unsullied sanctity of his life provoked as much anger as his theology. He was adjudged guilty of being "righteous over much." Methodism, the fashionable slander of the day, was unscrupulously laid to his charge; and attempts were made, by an unsparing use of this absurd, but then most powerful calumny, to render him contemptible in the estimation of his friends, and to deter them from countenancing an undertaking which promised nothing but scorn, ridicule, and persecution, to all who gave it their support. In justice to them, no less than to himself, Mr. Housman issued an Address, of which the following is a copy. It was printed as a placard, and posted on the walls.

*"To the Gentlemen who have encouraged the design of building a new Church, to be called St. Anne's, in the town of Lancaster.*

January 17, 1795.

"GENTLEMEN.—The peculiar nature of the opposition which the scheme you have so generously countenanced has met with, seems to require from me an explicit avowal of my religious principles.

"Popular clamour, by what means and for what purposes excited I forbear to inquire, has determined that I am a METHODIST. A harsh name will weigh

nothing with those who prefer argument to invective, and proof to assertion. If they who have applied, had condescended to *define* the term—if, with that precision and accuracy which accusers should study, and the accused may demand, they had affixed any clear and determinate ideas to the opprobrious word, and had favoured the world with a publication of those ideas, I would instantly have acknowledged or denied the justice of the appropriation of the stigma. I know but of one sect of Christians who choose to adopt the appellation, viz. the followers of the late Mr. Wesley; but he surely must be a babe in theological controversy, who, after a perusal of my publications, cannot discover a considerable disparity in our sentiments.

“Having therefore to obviate a charge, which, from a want of due specification, may imply anything or nothing, according to the different fancies and prejudices of those who hear it, the proper and only mode of vindication appears to be the following. If to believe, according to the plain, obvious, and grammatical construction of language, every Article which I have subscribed, and to frame my doctrinal discourses in *strict conformity* to this scriptural system of faith; if to admire, defend, and bow to, the discipline of that Church of which I am a Minister; if to have obtained, upon a late occasion, the most unqualified testimony to my principles and conduct, from clergymen equally eminent for extensive learning, acute penetration, and inviolable integrity, and among whom I have long resided; if to have recently received for a discourse (in which my religious and political sentiments were accurately stated,) the thanks of the

first characters in the country where I dwell; if to have had these thanks moved by a personage no less respectable than the learned and reverend Archdeacon of Leicester, and sanctioned, if I may so speak, by the subsequent approbation of my present Diocesan; if, in the discharge of my ministerial office, to endeavour, with anxiety and earnestness, to instruct the ignorant, reclaim the abandoned, and to bring all who hear me not only to *possess*, but to *feel the influence* of that religion which can divorce them from the vices, support them under the sorrows, elevate them above the allurements, and carry them with composure, confidence, and joy, through the closing scene of this world:—if this statement, or any part of it, betrays the features of Methodism, I am constrained to allow the charge; but if it consist in anything, either incompatible or uncongenial with what has been alleged, I reject the imputation, as equally illiberal, injurious, and unjust.

“I rely with confidence upon your candour, to excuse anything I have said, which may wear the appearance of an ostentatious display of the various and unequivocal testimonials with which I have been lately honoured. Nothing but the imperious law of necessity—nothing but an assurance that the effects of misrepresentation could not, *at present*, be adequately counteracted by any different mode of vindication—should have extorted from me a sentence which, in the judgment of enmity itself, should bear the remotest affinity to self-adulation.”

Notwithstanding the four thousand two hundred pounds so promptly subscribed, Mr. Colton's church



was never built. The sudden abandonment of the design, of which I can find no trace beyond the second meeting on the 7th of January, leads me to believe that it had been originally propounded with a view of intimidating Mr. Housman, and of ridiculing the town of one whose strict doctrinal principles, and eminent personal holiness, rendered him an object of dislike to the indifferent and the ungodly. I lament my inability to impute a better motive.

The wretched spirit in which this project had its origin, long survived the scheme itself. Mr. Housman's letter did much to confirm the generous sympathy of his old friends, and to make some new ones, but it failed to allay the vindictive temper of his enemies, and perhaps tended to exasperate it. Among the most active, as well as most virulent opponents of his disinterested undertaking, were two clergymen and several members of the Corporation. To such lengths indeed did that venerable body carry its anti-evangelical ire, as actually to send a deputation to Dr. Cleaver, Bishop of Chester, in order, if possible, to prevail upon his lordship to withhold his license from St. Anne's. The bishop, however, having read and approved the very sermon which had so needlessly stirred up the unrighteous wrath of the self-styled "orthodox," refused to comply with the suggestions of the deputation, and accordingly licensed the obnoxious place of worship. St. Anne's was completed in 1795, and consecrated by the Bishop of Chester on the 23d of August in the following year. A few days prior to this event, Mr. Housman had received from Mr. Robinson, of Leicester, a letter of affec-

tionate encouragement. "I have had pleasure," says that admirable man, "in hearing of your welfare, through various channels, and hope soon to be assured that the Lord has opened for you a great door and effectual, though there be many adversaries. Your friends and people make frequent inquiries after you. May our gracious God bless you and yours abundantly, and give you wisdom, strength, and zeal, for your present important post." How completely these fervent wishes were fulfilled, is matter of notoriety. On the 14th of August, ten days previous to the day of consecration, Mr. Housman delivered his first discourse in the new chapel, from Ephesians, iv. 15; and continued, with but partial interruptions, for a term of nearly forty years, to preach twice every Lord's day. For a considerable length of time too—as long indeed as bodily health permitted—he had a monthly and a weekly lecture; for many years he was in the habit of catechising the children and addressing the young people of the congregation once a week; and down to the date of his resignation of St. Anne's, invariably held a Sabbath Evening Prayer-Meeting in the school-room connected with that chapel, and expounded the Holy Scriptures in a familiar way, for the especial instruction of the poorer classes. Of these meetings, one of the distinguishing features of which was that the devotions of the assembly were led by laymen, Mr. Housman was exceedingly fond of speaking; he always looked forward to them with unaffected delight, and remembered them with a pleasure and a satisfaction which it was truly gratifying to behold. It was here, he used to say, he believed his minis-

try to have been most eminently blessed. None who have heard him on these interesting occasions, can ever forget the simplicity and *fervour* of his manner—for he seemed to be invigorated rather than exhausted by the labours of the day; the plain and powerful language in which he conveyed to his humble audience the cheering truths of the Gospel; the deep and paternal affection which he could not refrain from expressing towards those by whom he was surrounded.

In building St. Anne's Mr. Housman was generously assisted by William Wilberforce, Esq., John Thornton, Esq., M. P., William Wilson Carus Wilson, Esq., of Casterton, and his old friend, the Rev. Charles Simeon. Mr. Wilberforce contributed twenty pounds, and Mr. Thornton fifty. Mr. Wilberforce, moreover, for many years presented Mrs. Housman with a donation of £5, in aid of the Sunday School in connexion with the Chapel. At what particular period Mr. Housman and the venerable friend of Negro Emancipation became acquainted I am unable to say, but they occasionally corresponded during a period of upwards of five and twenty years. That Mr. Wilberforce entertained for the minister of St. Anne's a very profound regard, may be inferred from the following passage in a letter to a mutual friend. "It is quite sufficient" he writes "for me to know that the project has Mr. Housman's sanction and support. His approbation is a satisfactory guarantee; and when I know that he has bestowed it, I need ask no more." The respect was reciprocated. Mr. Housman has deliberately recorded his opinion of "The Practical View of Christianity" in these

terms. "This invaluable book deserves, next to the Bible, the serious and frequent perusal of those who would see, on the one hand, a complete exposure of some prevailing and destructive errors in the religious system of many professed Christians, and who would obtain, on the other, a clear and consistent view of real holiness flowing from its legitimate and only source, the doctrines and principles of the Gospel." "There are but a few books," he used to say in familiar conversation, "that deserve to stand upon the same shelf with the Bible; and one of them is—Wilberforce's Practical View."

Before he came to reside permanently in Lancaster, Mr. Housman frequently indulged in extempore preaching, in which, I am told, he was uncommonly successful. The practice was discontinued in deference to the absurd prejudices of his fellow-townsmen, to whom the delivery of an unwritten sermon, in a chapel without a steeple or a spire, would have appeared, forty-five years ago, (however ridiculous the statement may seem now), an enormity of unpardonable greatness. Accordingly, in compliance with these prejudices, his pulpit discourses at St. Anne's were almost invariably committed to paper. I have not met with more than twenty or thirty manuscripts, perhaps scarcely so many, which are incomplete. His first extempore effort was at St. James's, in Warrington. The Rev. Mr. Glazebrook, at whose house he was staying, had repeatedly urged him to put away his book, and trust to a careful and diligent preliminary consideration of his subject, to his extensive and accurate acquaintance with the contents of the word of God, and to the aid of the blessed Spirit,

which was never yet denied to such as earnestly desired and sought it. Against the entreaties of his excellent friend he pleaded unconquerable timidity, and upon one occasion expressed a very positive persuasion that he should never be induced to preach extempore until he unexpectedly found himself in the pulpit without a sermon. Mrs. Glazebrook, who was present, determined he should try; and on the following Sunday contrived to abstract the precious manuscript from his pocket. The experiment was a dangerous one, but it answered. Mrs. Glazebrook, shocked at what she had done, caught the preacher's eye just as the hymn before sermon was concluding, and perceived, from his flushed and disconcerted countenance, that he had discovered the treachery, and was suffering painfully from the perplexity of his situation. With a composure and dignity of manner which indicated an utter freedom from all embarrassment, he announced his text, and, after a brief pause, began and continued a faithful and searching address, in a spirit of the most admirable self-possession.

One Sunday morning Mr. Glazebrook expected him to preach at St. James's, but as the hour when he ought to have made his appearance came and went without him, Mr. Glazebrook was obliged to perform the whole of the service himself. At the end of the sermon, confident that his young friend, if not hindered by insurmountable causes, would redeem his pledge, he informed his congregation "that Mr. Housman, with whom they were well acquainted, would be among them shortly," and proposed that they should occupy the time until his arrival by singing a hymn. In the midst of the

singing the belated minister, who had been delayed on the road by the breaking down of his gig, ascended the pulpit which Mr. Glazebrook had vacated, and, not knowing that one sermon had been preached already, proceeded to declare the message of salvation to an attentive and delighted assembly.

Besides the trials previously enumerated, Mr. Housman had other crosses to endure. He had to suffer *personal* indignities of various kinds. He became the subject of ridicule to old and young; the object of sneers, and laughter, and averted looks, and ribald criticism, and vulgar slander, and indecent contempt. Like his blessed Master, he was a sign to be spoken against. His name, though written in the Lamb's book of Life, was a proverb, a bye-word, and a reproach. I have more than once heard him declare that the gentlemen of Lancaster (there were some honourable exceptions) when they saw him coming along the street, would pass over to the opposite side, avoiding him as a pest; and an eye-witness of the transaction informs me, that upon the occasion of an Episcopal Visitation in the parish church, (the evils of enthusiasm being the substance of the "Charge") the assembled clergy shunned his presence with pharisaical pride, and stood aloof from the despised but holy minister. What were these things to Mr. Housman? That he keenly *felt* them is true, for he carried about him a human heart; but he thought of all his Saviour had felt for *him*, and, firm in his allegiance to the principle of trust in that Saviour's aid, bore up patiently against his cruel persecutions. The future rewarded both his patience and his trust.

A few years subsequent to the period referred to in the preceding paragraph, Mr. Housman printed and published the beautiful sermon entitled "The New Creation." This discourse occasioned uncommon merriment among certain of his reverend brethren. One of these persons, a well beneficed rector and pluralist, when he wished to be particularly entertaining used to take up what he scoffingly called "Housman's Creation," and, amid peals of laughter, read it aloud to his friends. He does not appear to have remembered the words of an apostle—"If any man be in Christ, he is a *new Creature*."\*

The obloquy thus poured upon the Minister of St. Anne's was far from being confined to him: it extended to his congregation. The reproach of Christ was upon them as well as on their pastor. They too were sneered at as methodists and fanatics; and they too, for Christ's sake, contemned the sneers. To be "one of St. Anne's" was to be one upon whom disreputable suspicions of all kinds might rest with impunity; it was to be a canting hypocrite, a disloyal subject, a disaffected sectarian in disguise. St. Anne's was called "the hot-bed of Dissent," and the glory or the shame of the imputation attached of course to all who sat within its walls. These were doubtless hard trials: but they drew the bond of affection that subsisted between Mr. Housman and his people closer and tighter, and acted as powerful incitements to that untiring energy and harmonious co-operation which

\* The predecessor of this avaricious pastor informed his daughter, from whose lips I have the statement, that if she persisted in going to hear Mr. Housman, he "would break every bone in her skin." This menace failed of its intended effect.

made St. Anne's what it was thirty or five-and thirty years ago. Bad as persecution is to bear, they who have the greatest reason to denounce it are the persecutors.

Many of his sermons of this period allude in pointed language to the uncharitable opposition with which the Christian efforts of himself and his friends were met by a perverse and stiff-necked generation. From one of these, the fragmentary state of which precludes its entire publication, I extract a passage.

"The carnal mind," says he, "is enmity against God; black and implacable enmity against the glorious God, and against all of God which is seen in his people. In the time of Cain and Abel, he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the spirit; the opposition has been continued throughout all generations, and even so it is now. The hatred is not the hatred of man as against man; it is the hatred of the fallen nature against the renewed soul; it is the hatred of Belial against the Spirit of Christ; it is the hatred of sin against holiness; of hell against heaven. Through the Lord's kind and protecting providence, the violence is now principally carried on through the strife of tongues; but it is carried on, and the work of enmity will be continued till time shall be no more. \* \* Perhaps some of you, my friends, have been lately impressed with the importance of eternal concerns. You feel an earnest wish to win Christ, and to rejoice before him at his coming; but when you sit down and count the cost, you are staggered. You are willing to do many things, and to suffer many things; but to have



your name cast out as evil; to be classed with the weak or the designing; to be pointed at by the finger of scorn; to endure the hiss or the laugh of the world; or, to say all in a word, to be branded by the common term of reproach and contempt, **METHODIST**—this is painful to flesh and blood. You shrink at the terrifying sound, and you are ready to say unto the Lord, ‘Have us excused from this bitter trial.’ Excused you cannot be, if you would be Christians, and save your souls. Consider a few particulars. How was the blessed Jesus treated? He was called ‘a glutton and a wine-bibber;’ his enemies told him ‘Thou hast a devil, and art mad.’ And shall the Lord suffer reproach; and shall the servant, with a vile cowardice, beg for shelter from the malice of tongues? Shame upon such a servant! He deserves not the name. \* \* Again:—What has the Son of God declared? ‘If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, much more will they call those of his household.’ You see then, that if you will be Christ’s, you must bear the badge. It cannot be avoided. The matter is settled. The words of Jesus are Yea and Amen. Again;—What has an inspired Apostle spoken upon the point? ‘Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.’ Again: what has the Judge of all determined? He has determined that they who deny him before men, shall be denied by him when he cometh in the glory of his Father. You, then, who are fearful; you, who are asking the world how far you may go in religion, without being called by a hard name, lay these things to heart. You cannot serve God and Mammon. If you be

not with Christ *openly*, he considers you against him. If you will not take up the Cross, you must not wear the Crown. If you will shrink from reproach in the cause of Jesus, you will have just so much profession as will make you miserable, just so much religion as will lead you to the left hand of the judge; just so much light as will conduct you to the blackness of darkness for ever. But, beloved, let us hope better things, and things which accompany salvation. With the help of the Lord, sought by much prayer, make a determined choice. Repent daily of sin. Look continually to the Lamb of God to take away your iniquities. Seek perpetual supplies of the Spirit of the Lord, to make all things new within you; and then, constrained by the consideration that Jesus Christ hung upon the Cross for your transgressions, go forth into the world *boldly*, bearing his reproach. And what will be the consequence? A peaceful conscience; walking with God as a Father and a Friend; your Saviour glorified; sweet communion with him in the means of grace; support in every sorrow; perhaps the song of victory when you die;—and certainly the song of triumph when you rise at the Last Day.”

Such were the means by which he sustained himself, and comforted his people, under the pressure of a persecuting world.

In 1797, the year which followed the opening of St. Anne's, Mr. Housman founded, at the suggestion and in accordance with the plans of his wife, the BENEVOLENT SOCIETY; a society which dispenses, in times of sickness, and according to an established scale, pecuniary aid to such as need it,

without distinction of sects or religious profession ; the only *condition* being that the recipients shall have been in the habit of attending *some* place of divine worship. The Benevolent Society is supported by annual subscriptions, and the interest of a few legacies ; by a yearly collection in St. Anne's Chapel, after a sermon preached on behalf of the institution ; and by the money contributed at the monthly administration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Too much praise cannot be bestowed upon this truly Christian and truly catholic society. For upwards of forty years it has been the means of carrying hope and comfort to many a desolate abode of poverty and wretchedness ; and it has exerted, indirectly, an influence in the promotion of the spiritual and eternal interests of the objects of its philanthropic agency, the extent and effects of which can only be fully known and rightly estimated in "the day of Christ."

At this period of his life, and indeed as long as mental vigour remained unabated, his conversational powers, when exercised on subjects congenial to his tastes and habits, were of a very superior order. The late truly excellent Mrs. Dawson, of Aldcliffe Hall, near Lancaster,\* declared to a gentleman from whom I derive the information, that he could make an exclusively religious conversation more generally attractive, and sustain it with interest for a much greater length of time, than any of the eminent and admirable Christian

\* Mother of the present Edward Dawson, Esq. Of Mrs. Dawson a Memoir has been edited by the Rev. Wm. Carus Wilson, Rector of Whittington. Many of Newton's letters (those to Miss F.) were addressed to her.

ministers among whom so many of her early days were providentially cast. None who enjoyed the privilege of his *unconstrained* society, will suspect this judgment of extravagance. He possessed, in a very uncommon degree, what Dr. Watts has called, "the happy talent of parlour preaching." His speech was always with grace, seasoned with salt, and was good to the use of edifying.—"He spake not forcedly," as John Howe says of Dr. Bates, "or with affectation, as acting a part," (of this he was incapable) "but from the settled temper and habit of his soul." Who that remembers what he was before the silver cord began to loosen, can forget the simple grandeur of some of his thoughts, the natural and engaging beauty of others; the skill which he exhibited in bringing out the hidden riches, and showing the fulness and unheeded significancy, of familiar texts; his successful application of scriptural images and scriptural phraseology to the specific movements of his own heart and mind; the felicity and weight of his pregnant aphorisms, in which whole disquisitions, stripped of their dulness, would often seem to be epitomised; the affectionate and gentle earnestness of his manner; the sweetness of his venerable countenance; his enlarged sympathy, his catholic benevolence, his love, his veneration, his child-like entireness of trust—but above all, his profound and most impressive *gratitude* whenever he spoke (and when did he *not* speak?) of his redeeming Lord, and the marvellous mystery of Redemption. These are things that can never be forgotten by those who enjoyed the happiness of experiencing them, and

they are things not very likely to be repeated in our busy, bustling, and secularizing age.\*

"Some of the most delightful moments of my life," says one, who, though a dissenter, deservedly possessed a large share of his best affections, "were spent beneath his hospitable roof. My visits to Acrelands were fraught with precious advantages, and have left behind them emotions of the deepest gratitude. Sometimes he would indulge me with an hour's conversation in his study; sometimes he would invite me to accompany him in his walks; at all times the same kind, gentle, considerate friend and counsellor; at all times the same meek, and humble, and *loving* Christian. It was impossible, I think, to be a minute in his presence without hearing from his lips some invaluable observation."

*Words of life* fell from *his* lips, as *words of course* fall from the lips of the majority of men. This was particularly the case at meal-times. "On these occasions," continues the same friend, "his heart seemed to overflow with thankfulness. Every meal was a sacrament; and his guests arose spiritually as well as bodily refreshed."†

\* Some of the most interesting remarks I remember to have heard him offer, were made in the beginning of 1838, (the year in which he died) and arose out of the word "so" in Acts xiv. 1—"They *so* spake that a great multitude believed." He enlarged upon the comprehensiveness of the little adverb, and proceeded to illustrate its meaning by showing the *kindness* of the general design of the Gospel, and by citing numerous examples (which he did with astonishing ease,) of the simple, direct, and *winning* spirit that distinguished the apostles in all their labours. He animadverted with considerable sadness upon the deplorable tendency of what he designated "scolding sermons," and lamented that in the present day violence should be so extensively mistaken for energy.

† The late most excellent Dr. Ryder, successively Bishop of Gloucester and Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, with whom the

"Whereas," says Mr. Statter, "in Christians of an ordinary standard, religious conversation might seem to be the result of some extraordinary labour and self-denial, and the bow, which had been bent for awhile from its natural position, must of necessity be again unstrung; in Mr. Housman it was just the reverse. 'He could not but speak of the things he had seen and heard.' What was labour to others, was relaxation and pleasure to him; what formed their relaxation, was his labour and self-denial. To other subjects beside Christ and his glory, his saving grace and power, he must be drawn, as it were, by force. These were the very elements of his being; and if by any means he had been for a time drawn from them, his mind would return, and, so to speak, rebound to them, with renewed and visible delight." "If privileged to enter his retirement," continues the same sympathising friend, "you found yourself in a new and heavenly atmosphere. In listening to the gracious words that fell from his lips, you felt yourself in the society of one who had habitual fellowship and intercourse with heaven. In the depth and tone of his spiritual feelings Mr. Housman had few equals, and perhaps in our day no superiors. There were times indeed, as his intimate friends have often observed, when his mind would seem to labour beneath the weight of its conceptions, and his thoughts appear too big for utterance. And it

venerable subject of these Memoirs became acquainted about the year 1819 or '20, duly appreciated his society, and used to call upon him whenever he passed through Lancaster. I know that on one occasion he remarked, "It is quite a privilege to sit an hour with Mr. Housman."

was truly delightful to remark, in the latter period of his life, when his mind had lost something of its former vigour, how he still retained this 'unction from the Holy One.' As it was said of the aged apostle, St. John, the beloved disciple of our Lord, that in his latter days, when, through age and infirmity, he was unable to do aught beside, he was carried about from place to place among the Christian assemblies, simply saying—'Little children, love one another;' so it was with this departed saint. He could latterly speak of nothing but that which is the grand and animating principle of the love of Christians to each other—the love of God in Christ Jesus."

To these affectionate testimonies, as just as they are affectionate, nothing can be added.

Mr. Housman's personal appearance, which underwent but little alteration during the last forty years of his life, was exceedingly prepossessing. His forehead, high and nobly expanded, and exhibiting, according to phrenological principles, the moral departments in very ample development, rose from a square and knotty base, characteristic less of versatility of intellect than of great powers of concentration, decision, and generalization. His nose and mouth were beautifully moulded; his eyes, the colour of which was the lightest and most perfect blue—were soft, tender, bright, and placid. The prevalent and habitual expression of his countenance was that of seraphic thoughtfulness; the radiant and unruffled contemplativeness of a heart and mind full of hope, and faith, and love, and the peace which passeth all understanding. His aspect presented the infallible indications of a sabbath

within. It seemed to declare what Rowland Hill declared of Cornelius Winter; "he would make the worst devil of any man in the world." "Looking into his face," said Mr. Lonsdale, when painting the admirable portrait from which the engraving forming the frontispiece of this volume is taken, "is like looking into Heaven." The remark may be fanciful, but it conveys very forcibly the idea of the discriminating sentiment of his features, and is in striking agreement with the observation of Mr. Berridge as recorded in a previous page. It was next to impossible to see him without thinking of what Christ said of Nathanael, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!" His voice, never of any great compass, was yet full, clear, well-modulated, and manly; capable, as they who knew him will readily attest, of giving equal effect to the hopes of the Gospel, and the terrors of the Law. Solemnity and sweetness were its main peculiarities. His stature was about five feet nine inches; his body thin, though not slight, being well proportioned, and his general deportment, until the weight of nearly eighty years bowed and enfeebled him, easy, dignified, and graceful. His manners were those of a man of education and social advantages, gentle and unobtrusive; in the presence of strangers, or, still more particularly, of *half-friends*, somewhat reserved, and perhaps a little formal; but at all times, whether restrained or free, distinguished by the invariable attribute of moral greatness, simplicity. He had a strong dislike of being entrapped into the company of those with whom he was unacquainted, and used to make as speedy a retreat as was compatible with the respect due to



the conventional habits of the world. For the benefit of such as think smiles and spirituality incongruous, I have pleasure in mentioning that Mr. Housman was always cheerful, and occasionally gay; that he could laugh at a good story as heartily as any body; and now and then, but this was seldom, would indulge in sly passages of innocent irony. "What do you think of the sermon?" he one day asked after having heard a visitation Discourse from the lips of a gentleman neither eloquent nor evangelical; "I think it an admirable sermon," was the answer, "and true to what you and I hold to be the grand principles of the Gospel." "You are right," he replied—"I wonder where he got it." Never once, during the whole of his ministerial labours, did he preach a sermon not of his own construction.\* "If a man cannot divide the word of God *himself*," he used to say, "let him give up his pulpit to one who *can*; and if he can but *won't*, let him pray for an increase of faith and zeal." Notwithstanding this opinion, however, he was invariably ready to lend his sermons to the more needy of his fellow ministers; and I have hundreds of manuscripts lying beside me that have travelled up and down England from one county to another, for the last five-and-twenty, or thirty years.

Through the instrumentality of these itinerating discourses, how extensively has the influence of Mr. Housman's principles and experience been diffused! Can it be doubted—composed as they were in dependence upon the Spirit of God—that the blessing of God has often followed them? Indeed, in numberless instances I know that it has.

\* He had written above 6000 sermons.

"I possess," says a clergyman now resident in Kent, "a series of his sermons written in 1798 and 1800. They interested me greatly when I heard them preached, and they have been the means of interesting others no less deeply. They have been heard by 'Bishops, Deans, and Chapters,' with various feelings; and have been taken down, whilst read, on several occasions. One of them was preached in King's College Chapel, Strand, last Sunday morning; I have reason to hope, not in vain." Upwards of twenty years ago he received from a clergyman in Cornwall to whom he had lent a packet of discourses, a letter expressive of gratitude for the loan, and of thankful acknowledgments to God for the signal way in which, in a variety of instances, they had been made subservient to the glorious purposes of divine grace. Not long before the date of this letter, they had proved the instruments of awakening to a sense of the value and importance of spiritual concerns, and of bringing to a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, four of the principal members of a distinguished and titled family in the parish of which the clergyman was then minister. On reading these truly consolatory and cheering statements, Mr. Housman was powerfully affected; and turning to a dear friend who sat near him, he exclaimed, with tears of gladness in his eyes, "Oh!—I shall never know the full *effects* of my poor labours, 'till I stand before the judge." The remark, my informant adds, was uttered in a tone and manner which indicated the union of the deepest humility and the purest joy.

The reserved and somewhat formal address which

characterized his intercourse with strangers, and which may be considered rather "an infelicity than a fault," has led to a very erroneous impression that Mr. Housman was difficult of access. It is certainly true, that except under circumstances which *demand*ed a surrender of his own feelings to the imperative sense of duty, he was incapable of making first advances; but it is no less true, that when advances were made to him, he received them, not merely with courteous alacrity, but in a spirit of ample and reciprocating gratitude. The cheerful readiness with which, in his ministerial character, he responded to the wishes of those who sought his counsel, is well known by hundreds still living; and it is beautifully evinced in a letter (written in 1804,) from which I am permitted to make the following extract.

"As you have given me authority to 'scold' you, I am half disposed to avail myself of the permission. I shall not, however, select as the subject of my animadversion, your being 'too presuming' in desiring me to write to you a second time, for I really feel that I am not a person of such consequence as to make it presumption in any one, much less in Mary, to request my correspondence. The ground and the materials for my anger (if angry I could be with you) would be found in the very first sentence you ever wrote and transmitted to me. You say—'It is with no small degree of *fear* that I venture to address you.' And what, my dear Mary, have you observed in me which could excite so troublesome a sensation as that of fear? If there has been anything like austerity or distance in my manner towards you, I can only say

that my manner and my heart were not in unison. Be assured, my dear child, that I esteem you, and that I love you. Let these two points be settled fully and abidingly in your mind; you will then speak to me with unrestrained confidence. You will consider me, and treat me, as if I were an affectionate and elder brother. Then all intercourse will be doubly pleasant."

Mr. Housman's general habits and pursuits, though they will be found to be more abundantly illustrated in the future pages of this memoir, may be pretty correctly inferred from what has been said already. Naturally of a contemplative and retiring frame of mind, he was inactive rather than indolent; fond of ease and quiet, though prompt to sacrifice both at the urgent call of duty; and prone, like most men of literary employments, to the insidious and enthralling sin of procrastination. He rarely commenced his sermons until a Thursday evening, and had often to finish his afternoon's discourse after dinner on a Sunday. He wrote with extraordinary rapidity, and almost without an interlineation or erasure. The cleanness of his manuscripts, when the compactness and elegance of his style are taken into account, is surprising. It should, however, be added, that though *written* quickly, his sermons were the result of patient thought, as well as of fervent and continual prayer: that not only every sentiment, but (at least as regards the principal parts of his discourses) the precise *words* had a form and connexion given them long before they were committed to paper. This habit may account for his successful imitation of the *manner* of extemporaneous preaching.

Thoroughly acquainted as he was with every syllable in his manuscript, he had seldom occasion to cast his eyes upon it; and it was curious to mark, as one sitting in the gallery had good opportunities of doing, how *instinctively*, as it were, he would turn over page after page exactly at the proper moment. The result was, a union of the several advantages which belong to extempore and written sermons respectively; the earnest and colloquial directness of the one—the more compressed, correct, and weighty significance of the other.

To ministerial visits Mr. Housman devoted less time than the more exacting of his friends seem disposed to approve. His constitutional diffidence, which rendered the idea of intrusiveness intolerable to him, conjoined with extreme aversion to the forced introduction and sudden discussion of religious topics, and a still greater disrelish of "talking for talking's sake," will in some measure account for the comparative defectiveness of this department of his professional duties. There was, however, another cause which operated with greater cogency than any of those already enumerated. Holding the *principal* office of a Christian Minister to be that of public instructor, and consequently regarding the obligations of that office as claiming the principal portion of a Minister's attention, he expended upon the engagements of the pulpit a degree of time, and thought, and preparation, with which an extensive and systematic round of pastoral visits, supposing him to have felt inclined to pay them, was incompatible. And who that seriously considers the blessed and abundant fruitfulness of his labours, would wish it other-

wise? Had he been less in his study, he would have been less liked and less useful out of it. It was from the secluded employments of the closet that his public ministrations derived the holy unction which gave them such astonishing effect. He was much with God in secret; and God rewarded him openly.

I am reminded with an anecdote which Mr. Housman was fond of relating. "A person travelling in Scotland, inquired of one of the inhabitants of a small village, whether the Minister of the place frequently visited the members of his congregation at their own homes. The reply was, referring to the pastor's close and habitual devotion, 'that he was in heaven all the week, and came down on the Sabbath to tell his people what he had seen and heard.'" "It frequently occurred to me," adds the gentleman to whom I am indebted for the anecdote, "how exactly this description of a minister's habits suited Mr. Housman. 'De te fabula narratur' was often on my lips when I heard him relate it, as he was repeatedly wont to do, though, I am certain, without the slightest consciousness of its application to himself."

In visiting *the sick*, especially those of the very poorest classes, Mr. Housman was most exemplary. To this duty he appropriated the afternoons, and, if need were, the evenings of two days in every week; nor did the stormiest weather prevent him. I have seen him, long after he had attained his seventieth year, put on his top-coat, and sally forth in the darkest and wildest of nights, to carry consolation to some suffering member of St. Anne's,

under circumstances of personal indisposition which would have justified even a younger man in keeping close at home. But whenever he hesitated, Mrs. Housman was near to encourage and decide.

In the year 1799, having purchased a portion of land at the south end of his native village, he built Acrelands, the house at present occupied by John Armstrong, Esq. Here he resided until the year 1818.

In 1802 he qualified as a Justice of the Peace for the County Palatine of Lancaster, being led to do so from an earnest desire to have access, for purposes of spiritual instruction, exhortation, and comfort, to the cells of the prisoners in the County Jail. His visits to these melancholy abodes of vice and wretchedness were frequent, and afforded him many opportunities of proclaiming with effect the unspeakably free and precious grace of God in the salvation of sinners.\*

The intemperate opposition of former years broke out against him with unabated violence, and was conducted under dignified auspices, in 1803. Not content with the dull and unpoetical orthodoxy of Sternold and Hopkins, or the still duller productions of Nahum Tate and Nicholas Brady, Mr. Housman committed the unpardonable indiscretion of superseding the lyrics of those sweet singers of Israel by a Hymn Book of his own compiling. To reject the spiritless rhymes which had for years

\* His private conversation was often rendered exceedingly interesting by the detail of circumstances connected with his experience among these prolific scenes of crime. The Rev. Legh Richmond, who visited Acrelands in 1815, makes the following entry in his diary: "Had much affecting information from Mr H. relative to some criminals, executed at various periods."

and years promoted slumber in the parish church, and to substitute the animating compositions of men who were poets as well as saints, indicated not merely an audacious contempt of the ways and wisdom of ancient time, but a degree of sincerity and Christian zeal which alarmingly threatened the safety of the Church. If Hymn Books were permitted, where would changes end? Accordingly, with a promptness and a determination which would have done credit to a better cause, complaints against him were preferred to the Bishop of the Diocese; and the Bishop of the Diocese, equally with the complainants hating hymns, peremptorily suggested the propriety of discontinuing the use of them. Of this hint I am not aware that Mr. Housman took any notice. The crusade was revived a few years later; and upon this occasion he addressed his diocesan on behalf of the persecuted little book. Allusion is made to the preposterous event in the following extract from one of his letters, dated July 12, 1820.

“We have had a *Visitation* indeed! Our poor Hymn Book trembles for its existence. I shall write to-morrow to the Bishop, to explain, petition, and conciliate if I am able. The Book, and they who sincerely and feelingly use it, are in safe hands. If we are deprived of our accustomed comfort in *this* way, we must look for a double blessing on the other means of grace. No power but the power of the Eternal can keep Christ out of our hearts, if we unfeignedly desire his presence; and that power is the handmaid of eternal mercy to give him the throne within,”

As the use of the Hymn Book was not discontin-



ued, he succeeded, I presume, in conciliating his "mitred chief."

In the year 1813, Mr. Housman's untiring efforts in his Master's service produced the most alarming symptoms in his health. The slightest exertion occasioned determination of blood to the head; and his medical attendants, foreseeing the probability of a fatal attack if his labours were not temporarily suspended, advised him to engage an assistant in the work of the ministry. In compliance with their suggestion, enforced as it was by the urgent entreaties of his intimate friends, he determined to do so; and, with this view, addressed the following letter to the Rev. William Carus Wilson, Rector of Whittington, at that time an under-graduate of Trinity College, Cambridge. From a part of this letter the reader will perceive that the pecuniary difficulties which subsequently encompassed him, had already begun to gather in his path.

"Acrelands, Nov. 22, 1813.

"MY DEAR SIR.—I am satisfied that I need offer no apology for requesting your kind inquiries after a suitable assistant in my ministerial duties. The pressure of labour has lately become much too heavy for a weak and shattered constitution. The affection upon the brain, occasioned, and every week revived, by preparation for, and exertion in the pulpit, has become such as to threaten very serious, and perhaps very speedy consequences. I have been obliged for some weeks to give up my attendance at the Poor-house; and I intend to-morrow morning to fly from all labour, and to visit Lutterworth. Do you know of any person that would be disengaged in the Spring, and whom you can re-

commend as a fellow-labourer at St. Anne's? I cannot at present positively commission you to *engage* a gentleman, because I am not yet certain whether I can raise a stipend. I am offering Acrelands for sale; and if I succeed in disposing of the premises, I intend to remove to a smaller house in Lancaster, and, as my family is decreasing, to keep only one servant. By this arrangement, I should hope to have it much better in my power than it is at present, to pay an assistant. Under these circumstances I beg the favour of you to be making the inquiry whether, if my plans succeed, I could obtain a Curate, and at what salary. I venture to hope that a pious young man would be pleased with the attendance at the chapel, and with the general state of the congregation. Perhaps my dear old friend Mr. Simeon could help you in the inquiry, if a suitable person does not immediately occur to your recollection. Please to give my kind love to Mr. Simeon, and to your brother.

"You, my dear young friend, must increase, and I must decrease. I am rapidly declining, but you have before you bright prospects of usefulness. Permit me to recommend unto you two points, to be the subjects of your daily meditation as a believer, and to be your perpetual theme as a Christian minister. These points are—the deep-rooted and total apostacy of man; and the glory and grace of Jesus. In proportion as the former is really known and experienced, and the latter is steadily and truly realized, humility, and love, and thankfulness, and obedience, mark the character. Through grace, my preaching has been principally, and especially lately, occupied with these two points, dwelling, of course, upon

their collaterals, and explaining the consequences; and the Lord, I think, has set to his seal that this mode of preaching is according to his will.

“ROBERT HOUSMAN.”

This letter is valuable, as containing a record of Mr. Housman's deliberate testimony to the powerful instrumentality of the discriminating doctrines of evangelical religion, for purposes of real experimental and practical efficiency. He has spoken more at large on the same subject in the following extract from a manuscript of a later date.

“The Gospel of the Lord Jesus is the ‘ministration of the Spirit.’ It is the instrument by which, when faithfully used, the Blessed God, for the sake of Christ, gives his Spirit, to enlighten, convert, and save the soul. If we should preach what has been called ‘*a mixed covenant* ;’ if we should say—‘Obey the law as well as you are able; and where you fall short, Christ will make up your defects ;’—we might preach zealously, we might preach constantly, we might preach with enticing arts and with wisdom of words, we might continue preaching for half an age, but our preaching would be all in vain. For anything we had done to help them, our hearers would go, one after another into eternity, as ignorant of themselves, of the soul, and of the great salvation wrought out by the meritorious undertaking of Jesus, as if they had lived and died in a heathen land. They would perish in their sins; but their blood would be required at our hands. If, on the contrary, we lay the axe to the root of the tree; if we frankly and entirely show our people their transgressions; if we speak home, and boldly declare to them that *an evil apostate nature*

*has been the sad source of all their actual sins*; it we proclaim that the sentence of condemnation is deserved, and is actually gone forth; that there is no help or hope for mercy but in the Cross of Christ, in a simple and absolute dependence on his obedience unto death—but that through the meritorious efficacy of this death there is the fullest and most plenteous acceptance; if we publish the necessity of a total change of heart before a person can enjoy communion with God, or see his kingdom; then we shall find that God will not leave us without a witness. He will give a testimony to his own truth; and it will be proved, by positive and repeated effects, that ‘the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged sword.’ Upon this point I speak experimentally; upon this point I can appeal with confidence to my own dear people. In carefully reviewing my ministry, though I cannot but fear, that many of those confided to my charge have from time to time been removed ‘without Christ and without hope,’ yet I know (and may the Lord God receive all the honour!) that the Gospel, as delivered through my insufficiency, has been made to others ‘the savour of life unto life.’ Yes—many, very many, through the aboundings of divine grace, and to the everlasting glory of the God of all consolation, have been taken from amongst us, concerning whom I would say, in the quaint language of the excellent Bishop Hall—‘May I at last lift up my head among the heels of these thy people!’”

Robert Hall, in addressing a Missionary on his designation to an Indian post, gave the following advice. “Let your instruction be in the form of a

*testimony* ; let it, with respect to the mode of exhibiting it, though not to the spirit of the teacher, be *dogmatic*. *Testify* repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." This was eminently the case with Mr. Housman; nor does it appear that the policy suggested in recommending the principles of Christianity to a *pagan* nation, will not be equally fit and efficacious as regards a congregation of *professing Christians*—comprising, as all congregations of professing Christians necessarily do, many characters upon whom the darkness of a pagan ignorance, deepened by a worse than pagan indifference, rests. In fact, it has been found, ever since the message of salvation was first promulgated, to be just the *most* fit and efficacious policy. Where has the blessing of God, evidenced in moral transformations from sin to holiness, been expressed by the largest and happiest effects? Not certainly where the Gospel was most elaborately *defended* ; but where in humble dependence upon the secret but sure and quickening influences of the Spirit, it was most faithfully and unambitiously, and unmixedly *proclaimed*. "Not by might, nor by power, *but by my Spirit*, saith the Lord ;" and, agreeably to this remarkable statement, he seems to take a peculiar pleasure in honouring and prospering that ministry which has *trusted* his Spirit most unreservedly. Men who have *the real thing* really at heart, will dare to be very simple and very unpretending in its cause. They will dare to have their talents depreciated, and their attainments disparaged ; to have their names cast out, and to be accounted the filth and offscouring of the earth, if by the foolishness of their preaching they may but

win souls to Christ. The direct and downright preaching of Jesus, in these days of critical and carping hearers, requires far more boldness, self-denial, and consistency of decision, than is generally suspected. There is a lamentable aversion in all ranks and classes, to the undecorated propositions of the Bible. The embassy of divine mercy must be philosophized and rhetoricated, or we reject it. Plainness of speech is meanness of speech. We call for figures and flowers of oratory; we are luxurious in our tastes, and exorbitant in our demands; spiritual life and spiritual death, the vast themes of eternity, and the engrossing subjects of revelation, are powerless to move us, unless tricked out and garnished with the pride of learning and the glory of the schools. We go to church or chapel as we would go to a lecture-room or a theatre—for intellectual instruction or intellectual entertainment; and our approbation of the performer, is in exact proportion to the skill which he exhibits, or the talent he displays. The fact is, we take the bread of life and the water of life, not because we hunger and thirst, but in compliance with the pressure of a fashionable duty; and the preacher who best succeeds in turning the water into wine, and the bread into sumptuous fare, is the preacher under whom we ‘sit’ with the greatest composure.”

In the month after that in which the foregoing letter to Mr. Wilson was written, the Rev. John Beethom, now and for many years the efficient and highly respected Head-Master of the Free-Grammar School in Lancaster, entered upon the Curacy of St. Anne’s. At this important post he remained until the end of 1817. The letter which Mr

Housman addressed to him on receiving his resignation, indicates the friendly terms on which they parted.

"MY DEAR SIR.—In acknowledging the receipt of your letter, conveying your resignation of the Curacy of St. Anne's, I beg leave to offer you my best thanks for your obliging readiness in rendering me, whenever I was under the necessity of asking it, more than the stipulated quantum of service.

"I take the liberty of expressing my unfeigned wishes, that wherever you are engaged, you may experience largely the presence and blessing of God, and be an honoured instrument in extending the kingdom of his Son."\*

The untimely death of one of his nephews, who was drowned in the river Lune, on the 6th of January, 1814, drew from Mr. Housman the following letter to the bereaved mother. Sorrow, he knew, is one of the appointed avenues through which the spirit of consolation and of grace passes to the heart; and, ever alive to the glory of God and the happiness of his creatures, he allowed no sadness which came within the circle of his own experience, to pass by unimproved.

"January 6, 1834.

"MY DEAR SISTER.—I know that you will not think me unkind in not calling upon you at present. My nerves are not of the strongest class; and you will accept this mode of my expressing my sincere

\* I have great satisfaction in stating, and I do it with feelings of gratitude as well as pleasure, that Mr. Housman invariably received from Mr. Beethom, both during and subsequent to the period of their co-operation at St. Anne's, the most respectful and obliging evidences of regard

condolence with yourself, Mr. H., and the whole family.

"Your trial is indeed severe, and nature will and ought to feel. I can judge of you by what I should have suffered. But if we can truly learn the lessons which all afflictive dispensations are intended to teach us, neither you nor I have endured or can endure one sorrow too many. They teach us three lessons. They teach us—

"1. *To bow with unfeigned resignation to the will of God.* That will is but another name for infinite wisdom and unbounded goodness. He permits the fall of a sparrow, and he appoints the death of a child; and what he does we know not now, but we shall know hereafter. For the present he says, 'Be still—and know that I am God.' I am glad to hear that you are enabled to exercise this quietness of spirit.

"2. *They teach us to pray earnestly that the visitation may be sanctified.* While everything is easy and comfortable around us, our depraved hearts are prone to cleave to the earth, to expect our happiness from objects and things here below. It is God's intention, when he afflicts, to rouse us from our dangerous dream of an earthly Paradise, that we may arise and seek mercy of his Gospel, the light of his countenance, and the joy of his salvation. He dries up the stream, that we may repair to the fountain. Oh let us pray most fervently that every affliction may be thus sanctified! The affliction will then lose its name. It will be pure mercy; though clothed in a garment which our ignorance would neither choose nor relish.

"3. *They teach us to consider our remaining*



*mercies.* Of the least of these we are utterly unworthy;—but how many are still continued! You have lost one dear child, but you have many affectionate children still around you, to be the solace of your declining years. I likewise have suffered, though not in the manner which at present calls forth your tears. But I have multitudes of mercies left. Let us, then, both pray for divine grace, that we may ‘love, and sing, and wonder.’”

On the occasion of the sudden death (in 1823) of the beloved sister to whom this letter was addressed, Mr. Housman, on the evening of the mournful day, gathered together the chief members of the family, at the house of one of his nieces for the purpose of joining in thanksgiving to God for having taken to himself one so dear to them, and of supplication to the throne of grace for a spiritual improvement of the trying providence.

From Lutterworth, where the Rev. John Gathorne of Kirkby, Lonsdale, who had married his eldest daughter, was curate, Mr. Housman addressed, in 1814, the following letter to one of his sons. The infant whose birth it gratefully records, became in 1836 the wife of the Rev. Thomas Burrow of Pinner, and died in 1838 in the twenty-fifth year of her age. Of Mrs. Gathorne some affecting particulars will be found in a succeeding page. A long tried and faithful friend of her mother’s, Miss Coltman of Leicester, thus mentions her in a letter written immediately before her happy union with Mr. Gathorne. “June, 1813. I have had with me since my return the daughter of my much valued friend, Mrs. Housman. She is a lovely young woman; sensible, pious, of ele-

gant manners, and most amiable temper. It has been most highly gratifying to me to see the child of such a friend rising up a blessing to society. She indulges me with her affection, and has won no small share of mine." Mr. Gathorne was for some time curate of Heysham, near Lancaster, and of Bisley, in Gloucestershire, and afterwards held the living of Tarvin near Chester. He died suddenly, at Kirkby, Lonsdale, in the year 1831.

"LUTTERWORTH, Friday, August 12, 1814.

"DEAR TOM.—Through the protection and blessing of a gracious Providence, I reached this place a little after six o'clock yesterday evening, in health and safety, and about eleven hours after a little grand-daughter had been ushered into the world. Through the Lord's goodness, Jane had a most favourable time, and she and the baby are very well. I desire to be very thankful for the great mercy.

"Great mercy has likewise been shown unto me on my journey. I was preserved unhurt, in a moment of considerable danger. On my return from London last Wednesday, the coach was much crowded, both with passengers and luggage. We were nineteen, within and without. About nine in the evening the coach was overturned; I was on the outside. Out of the nineteen, only two escaped without injury; I was one of the favoured two. When the coach was in the act of going over, I was preserved from all fear: and when we were down, I found myself near a gutter, with a box resting upon my leg. I soon extricated myself, and found that I had not received even a scratch. This wonderful and entire deliverance calls for the

profoundest gratitude, and a life devoted to the deliverer. That scripture has since been much upon my mind—"I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord." Five of my fellow travellers were *very seriously injured*; whether the injuries will be fatal, I cannot say."

The other passenger who escaped unhurt, a Wesleyan Minister, had treated him with remarkable kindness, and for some time before the melancholy event occurred they had been deeply engaged in an interesting religious conversation. Mr. Housman would frequently revert to the deliverance recorded in this letter. "If any journey is 'prosperous,' " he says, in another communication to another correspondent, "we are told that it is so 'by the will of God.' This view of the Lord—of his protection, presence, goodness—if it could be always in exercise, would do indeed what is said of the Philosopher's stone; it would transmute all into gold." And to the same correspondent, on a later occasion, he writes thus. "The gracious Redeemer, who upholdeth all things by the word of his power, upheld me in my going out, and has mercifully restored me, in safety and health to my dear family and people. It is *my desire* at least to be able to set up an Ebenezer, and that a very lofty one; and to inscribe upon it, in large and capital letters—"HITHERTO HATH THE LORD HELPED ME." "

Mr. Housman, as these and other passages in the foregoing pages amply testify, was a devout believer in a particular providence; the denial of which amounts, virtually and practically, to the denial of a providence altogether. He saw the creative and sustaining power of God in the hyssop

that springeth out of the wall, as well as in the cedar tree that is in Lebanon; and he saw the superintending and directing power of God in the smallest incidents of individual life, as well as in the grandest events of empires, or the majestic movements of the starry skies. "In the divine administration," he has beautifully said to an affectionate and valued friend, "the difference between what we call little and great occurrences is annihilated. There is nothing *little*; for it is under the control of the Great God, and is leading on to some great event." In a sermon preached on the occasion of the sudden death of fourteen persons, who, in consequence of the upsetting of a boat, were drowned in the river Lune, in 1830, he thus inquires. "Shall we venture to speak of *accident*? We should speak profanely. We should utter the language of atheism. What! Has the Lord God Omnipotent resigned his government of the world? Has he abandoned his throne, and commissioned ACCIDENT to 'bring the wind out of his treasures,' and so 'to lift up the waves of the sea,' that immortal beings, without the divine bidding, shall pass the gulf between time and eternity? Oh! no. The Lord reigneth and let the earth rejoice. We are not living in a world deserted of God. Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without our heavenly Father. He giveth to all mankind 'life, and breath, and all things;' and when he issues the command, the 'life' is extinguished, the 'breath' departs, and the 'all things' pass over into the hands of other possessors. He saith, 'Return, ye children of men; and the children of men return, either beautified with salvation, or deformed, de-

filed, and ruined, with all their iniquities upon them." "I wish you" (it is thus he addresses a beloved brother-minister,) "I wish you a safe and happy journey; safe, from what we *miscall* accidents; and happy in the enjoyment of the Saviour's presence." And in a communication to another highly valued clergyman, the sentiment which pervades these passages breaks out in the following earnest and hopeful exclamation; "Oh! that you may come here, and that I may go to *your* people, in the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ! An exchange of this kind cannot be by accident. It may be a connecting link between some soul and salvation."

They who enjoyed the advantages, and, I may add, incurred the responsibility of a regular attendance upon Mr. Housman's ministry, do not need to be told how frequently and with what strenuous emphasis he urged the necessity of non-conformity to the spirit of the world; with what experimental wisdom he explained the nature of the duty, and the means of performing it; and with what calm and holy rapture, he announced and dwelt upon the blessedness annexed to the performance. These were favourite subjects, and he treated them with power. The subjoined passages, extracted from a communication addressed in 1814, to one who halted between two opinions, show how near his heart the important matter lay.

"Do not," he says, "as you value your soul, be excusing your acknowledged worldliness by urging this or the other reason, such as your situation, your temptations, your connexions. Cut all reasonings short by these inquiries—What does the

Bible say?—What has God Almighty determined? —By what rule will the Judge of all proceed when he sitteth upon the throne of glory? Put these questions fairly, honestly, often, and you will be convinced that *conformity to the world is but another name for ruin*. Yield to the conviction, and ask grace from the Lord that you may be one of his separated people; otherwise you will be separated from the Lord for ever. A Christian should be satisfied with nothing that will not satisfy God.

“I anticipate an objection. You will say, as thousands have said before, and as thousands are blindly saying now, that worldly pleasures are both innocent and necessary. *Try their innocence, whilst I am asking you the following questions*. Have you any authority for expecting that the grace and blessing of God will sanctify them to your soul? Do you actually find the cheering presence of the Lord, while you are partaking of them? Can you, in the society with which you then mingle, speak of the glorious Gospel, of a Saviour’s love, of the costly price of redemption, of a Christian’s joys and sorrows, of a believer’s inheritance and crown? Can you, and do you, my dear T——, retire from these amusements with a spiritual mind suited to prayer and praise—disposed to hold fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ? Do they prepare your soul, by cherishing holy and heavenly affections, for the joys and songs of the spirits of the just made perfect? If they do not, Oh! how worthless. Would you have no objection, while joining in worldly pleasures, to meet the stroke of death, or to hear the solemn summons ‘Come to judgment—stand

before the Son of Man'? Now, my dear young friend, answer these questions honestly ; as in the sight of God—and then they *will* be answered honestly ; and, having answered them, say whether the common pleasures and amusements of the world are innocont or not. In proportion as the heart is filled with them, there is no room for God ; and God regards such a heart as an Idol's temple. Ah, my dear T., we have no time to squander away in frivolous follies, nor do they suit our perilous condition here. Enemies are encamped against our souls ; enemies without, enemies within ; their power is great, and their name is Legion. And besides this—yet a little while only is the light with us. Death is near. Eternity is at hand. Our business is, not to trifle, but to prepare to meet our God ; to watch and pray ; to resist the devil ; to be humbled before God ; to be trusting, loving, and serving Christ ; to be pressing forward toward the Crown of Life ; to be seeking to have an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom.

“Oh ! be not conformed to this world. Why should you ? It can furnish no solemn or abiding joy. There is no paradise below. God, reconciled in and through Christ Jesus, is the *only* happiness of the soul of man. His favour is better than life. His salvation is a diadem ; a crown to the meanest beggar, who by faith receives it. His sanctifying grace is most precious. His presence is light in darkness, comfort in sorrow, the foretaste of heaven, the first-fruits of everlasting bliss. If you look for happiness *in the Lord*, disappointment cannot reach you ; for the Lord whom you seek will not only be the FOUNTAIN of your joy, but will be the GUARDIAN of your joy—yea, for ever and ever.”

Words similar to these occur in one of the very last discourses he ever wrote. "My brethren," he exclaims, "let it be fixed in your mind as a certain eternal truth, that a realizing view of the glory and grace of God in Christ Jesus, is the true *satisfying comfort* of the immortal soul; is the means appointed by God of a *growth in grace*; is a *sure preparation* for heavenly joy. If you seek comfort *here*, you will find it; if you seek it elsewhere, you will mourn your disappointment and folly—yea, and for ever." The spirit of both these valuable extracts animates and pervades almost every letter in this volume, it was the habitual temper of Mr. Housman's life, and he carried it with him into the valley of shadows. The idea of the glory and grace of God in Christ Jesus, may be said not merely to have constantly *engaged* his mind, but to have *filled* it. "In the believing contemplation of them," says Mr. Statter, "he found his daily pleasure and delight. They were his very meat and drink."

In the year 1815, the Rev. William Carus Wilson, at that time curate of Whittington, near Kirkby Lonsdale, having failed to satisfy Dr. Law, the then Bishop of Chester, on some points at issue between Arminian and Calvinistic divines, was denied Priest's Orders at his lordship's hands. Shortly afterwards, from the same or a kindred cause, his license to preach was withdrawn, and he was suspended from the ministerial functions.

This matter occasioned Mr. Housman extreme pain. With the promptness of true and generous friendship, he instantly despatched a letter to Mr. Wilson, offering to write to the Bishop of Gloucester, and endeavour to interest that excellent pre-



late in his behalf. "I am distressed," says he, "more than I ought to be, for you are suffering in the cause of your Master; and the promise is sure, that it will work for your good." And so it did; but the process was keen and trying. "You can form no notion whatever," he says, in a letter of the 25th of October, "of the tumult, the triumph, and the slanders of this place:"—and in order, if possible, to obviate some of the effects of calumny, he determined to send an explanatory communication to the public paper. "I have studiously endeavoured," he observes, still addressing Mr. Wilson, "to avoid every expression which could be construed to have even the most indirect allusion to the Bishop. My object was, not to censure any, but to vindicate the cause and the persons which were slandered. Your delicacy must not be hurt at some expressions of commendation. It seemed quite necessary that the statement should be full, and I have not written a word contrary to my convictions and my feelings.' \* \* 'Wherefore do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a *vain* thing?' I expect great and glorious results from the storm which is raging."

The following is the communication alluded to in the foregoing paragraphs.

*"To the Editor of the Lancaster Gazette.*

"SIR,—Various and contradictory reasons for the temporary professional silence of the late officiating minister of Whittington have been assigned in this town and neighbourhood, and assigned, it may be candidly supposed, through the want of due information. Some of these reasons are too vague and trifling to be noticed; and one of them is too

horrible to remain unnoticed. A regard, not merely to the honoured individual who is calumniated in his absence, but to circumstances far more imperious than the partialities of friendship, compels me to correct the cruel misrepresentation. It is affirmed amongst us, at least virtually, to be Mr. Wilson's belief that "if a person can only persuade himself that his state for eternity is once safe, he may then indulge in the grossest sins, without fear or danger." If there could be only ten men found in the united kingdom, who, with true religious sensibility, would shudder with abhorrence at the first mention of such an abominable position, amongst the foremost of the ten would appear my very excellent friend.

"I shall endeavour to obviate the strange misrepresentation, not by discussing the *doctrines* which Mr. Wilson preaches, but by exhibiting his *practice*; not by detailing the *principles* which he enforces, but by showing the effects of those principles upon his own *heart* and *conduct*. The following outline, though faint, is certainly correct. In the pulpit, Mr. Wilson was plain, faithful, earnest, and affectionate. His whole manner was an echo to an apostle's declaration—"I seek not yours, but you." He collected together the children of the parish, to the amount of one hundred, and formed a Sunday School in his own house, where he and his friends were the willing and assiduous teachers. That he might preserve the Sabbath from violation, in the varied forms of idleness, folly, or intemperance, he received on the evening of the sacred day the young men of the village into his house, where he endeavoured to improve them in reading, and in the

knowledge of their several duties to God and man. He was also alive to the temporal distresses of his people, and had formed excellent plans for the permanent comfort of the poor. He considered the parish as his more extended family, and his thoughts, his time, his purse, and his heart, were devoted to their service. He was their prudent counsellor, their kind friend, and their upright pastor. He is followed by their benedictions and their tears : and his name will remain fragrant among them—perhaps to distant generations.

“I shall be happy, Mr. Editor, if this brief but faithful delineation of the holy and useful conduct of Mr. Wilson should be the means of removing misconception from amongst us, and of checking its effects. Every generous mind rejoices when the veil which misapprehension had thrown over an excellent character, is removed, and it is suffered to shine forth in its genuine brightness.

“**VERITAS.**”

This letter produced the desired effect. As Mr. Housman, observes, in another communication, “People seldom reply to facts, if these facts are stated with proper temper, and with a strict regard to truth.” The letter of Veritas accordingly remained unanswered ; and the indecent triumph which had continued up to the very day of its appearance in the Gazette, suddenly ceased. Mr. Housman expressed great thankfulness to God for this issue. The injurious rumours had done much mischief in Lancaster. Many of the congregation of St. Anne’s had been insulted, some directly, some indirectly ; and most of them were cast down in sorrow. The circumstance had blinded and

hardened opposers still more than ever. Mr. Wilson was held forth as an Antinomian, and Mr. Housman's doctrine was identified with his. But the mouth of the gainsayer was stopped.

The next letter which Mr. Wilson received from his venerable friend contained the subjoined passage in reference to this painful dispensation.

"I desire to be thankful and to rejoice that you have mercies as well as trials. The peace of God in your soul, and domestic comforts without, are a very gracious counterbalance indeed, to the other sufferings which for a time you are called to endure. \* \* I suppose, before this reaches you, you will have heard from the Bishop. I do not expect much that is favourable. However, if his plans be not the Lord's, his determinations will be strangely overruled. The carpet is yet folded up. You see only a small part, and that on the rough and unseemly side. It will shortly be unfolded. You will then behold *the whole*, at a glance, and behold the whole *on the right side*; and surely you will recognize the hand of a Father in the workmanship; and behold, in the colours, the rich tints of holiness, wisdom, and grace."

Mr. Wilson was shortly afterwards ordained to the Vicarage of Tunstal. In a letter to Mrs. Wilson, dated Feb. 22, 1816, Mr. Housman makes the following observations. "I hope that you will soon receive back your dear husband, commissioned and fully authorized by man to preach the everlasting Gospel. He long since received his commission from the exalted Redeemer; and what an account have they to give, by whom the execution of that commission was suspended! \* \* As

William has been more calumniated in Lancaster than in any other place, I should wish him to preach his first sermon in my pulpit."

During Mr. Wilson's residence at Tunstal, a domestic affection drew from the sympathizing heart of his friend the following Christian consolation.

"You are all in the furnace; but purification, everlasting purification, will be the gracious issue. And then, what a mercy, to have such occasion, from the states of mind in which your dear sisters are preserved, to mingle Hallelujahs with sighs! 'A man can receive nothing'—no, *nothing* of what you mention,—'except it be given him from above'—and where the Lord begins, he will make an end. Chasms in families are painful things; but our pains are sadly selfish if they lead us ever to wish that the *increasing* Chorus of Heaven, and the *completed* blessedness of our friends, should be *delayed* on our account."

In the year 1816, Mr. Housman laid before the public the first number of "The Pastoral Visitor, or a Summary of Christian Doctrine and Practice." It was prefaced by an affectionate Address to the Congregation of St. Anne's, of which the following is a copy.

"MY DEAR FRIENDS.—The shadows of the evening are drawing fast around me. Increasing years, and a feeble constitution, concur in reminding me that the time cannot be far distant, when the place which knoweth me must know me no more. But the moments which are hurrying forward the hour of our final separation, find me, if I mistake not, more and more anxious that you *all* may obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. I

seem to perceive, with more affecting clearness than ever, the straitness and the difficulties of the way to eternal life : and that between the favour and the wrath of God, between a soul saved and a soul lost for ever, there is a difference which nothing but the experience of Eternity can truly explain.

“Under the impression of these views and circumstances, it is my intention, so long as I am continued among you, to place in your hands, at the close of each succeeding quarter of a year, a *plain* discourse upon some important subject. The doctrines which may be stated, explained, and applied, are those which you have heard for nearly twenty years. I am well persuaded that they are the doctrines of the Established Church, and that their tendency is holy. I have likewise evidence, which cannot deceive me, that they are the great truths of the Gospel of Christ. That evidence is nothing less than the witness and the seal of the living God. He has borne the testimony of his approbation to the preaching of ‘Christ crucified.’ He has fulfilled his promise, that his word shall not return unto him void. He has given the increase.

“I look around you, and I see, in many an instance, that the blind have received their sight : that the lame have obtained strength, and are walking steadily in the narrow path : that the lepers are cleansed—have exchanged the pollutions of allowed iniquity, for repentance, and faith, and the love of God : that the deaf have heard the glad tidings of salvation, with astonishment and joy : that the dead in sin are raised to spiritual life, and

to the enjoyment of spiritual comfort: and that the poor to whom the Gospel has been preached, are blessed with the unsearchable riches of Christ. When I see this exact agreement between what is described and promised in the Bible, and what is actually and evidently wrought among you, I see a renewed answer to the Saviour's supplication to his Father, "Sanctify them, through **THY TRUTH**:" and I need not an angel from heaven to tell me—Here is the Gospel of Jesus; for here is the finger of God.

"I beg your prayers, that the blessing of the Lord may prosper the intended publication: and that we may rejoice together in the day of Christ, with an exceeding and eternal joy. I am, my dear people, your faithful friend, and affectionate minister."

Only sixteen numbers of the work, barely sufficient to make a volume, were completed. The intervals between the appearance of the several publications soon extended beyond the prescribed term, and, in one or two instances, years elapsed. Though at different periods of his life he printed many sermons, Mr. Housman greatly disliked the unavoidable trouble and inconvenience attending the preparation of writings for the press, and was glad to escape them whenever he could. Solely to this aversion must be attributed, first the suspension, and then the abandonment, of an undertaking which afforded him, in pecuniary respects, considerable encouragement.

One of these sermons (that on Prayer) incurred no small degree of opposition on the ground of its supposed Sabellianism. Mr. Housman, deeply

pained by this suspicion of heterodoxy, referred the discourse, through the medium of a mutual friend, to the censure of the Rev. Wm. Roby, of Manchester. Mr. Roby, having perused it with great attention, desired Mr. Housman to rest easy under the imputation; and expressed himself persuaded that *such* preaching could not fail to be attended with abundant blessings from the Spirit of Grace.

It was probably owing to the suspicions excited by his excellent discourse on Prayer, that he published, in the sixteenth number of the Pastoral Visitor, a sermon on the Deity of Christ, in which his deliberate belief of this ancient and mysterious doctrine was placed beyond the shadow of a doubt. An answer, under the title of "The Friendly Monitor—intended as a Companion to the Pastoral Visitor, by the Rev. Robert Housman, A. B.—containing remarks on that gentleman's triumphant proofs of the Deity of Christ, by Omicron," appeared in 1819, at Liverpool.\* By the arguments of this pamphlet Mr. Housman seems to have been unconvinced; for in the volume of his sermons published by Seeley, in 1836; the discourse which had provoked it is reprinted. One or two passages, however, which appeared, upon mature reflection, to be inconsistent with Christian liberality of sentiment, are omitted. The sermon is a very good one; by no incompetent judge it has been pronounced to be a beautiful specimen of close and accurate logic. This praise admits of qualification; for the subject of it is chargeable with taking for granted, on assuming without analysis and proof,

\* The author having suppressed his name, it is no business of mine to disclose it.



the rightness of the premises ; a proceeding obviously incorrect, if the refutation of Unitarianism was the object of the composition—though, it should be added, proper enough, supposing that object merely to have been the declaration of individual opinion. Omicron's reply possesses the merit of exhibiting, within contracted limits, some of the principal grounds of dissent from the popular hypothesis against which it is directed ; but it is written in a flippant and contemptuous style, more objectionable (if possible) than the solemn dogmatism which too frequently characterizes the productions of orthodox theology.

If there was one doctrine of his church to which Mr. Housman attached a greater degree of importance than to another, it was assuredly that of the Deity of Christ. This doctrine, without which, in his estimation, the kindred hypothesis of the Atonement would have lost its worth, he made, in early life, the foundation of his system, and from this elect and precious foundation he never moved. To him it was unspeakably more than a question of mere critical interest or metaphysical speculation ; it lay at the very root of his personal piety ; it sustained his dearest hopes, calmed and dispelled his fears, deepened the solemnity and vividly displayed the sinfulness of sin, and magnified the mystery of redeeming grace. It was no cold and barren theorem, taken into the mind to lie there fruitless ; but a warm and quickening spirit, treasured in the heart. It gave intelligibility to the incomprehensible idea of God, and brought it into contact with the affections. It converted an overwhelming abstract proposition into a distinct and endearing

practical reality. It acted impulsively; and unless doctrines thus act, of what value are the best? They cannot justify, unless they sanctify. It acted directively; it was a doctrine of instruction, energy, and effect. It gave a vast consequence and an awful grandeur to the Bible; it gave life and infinite sincerity to invitations, eternal security to promises, constraining power to motives, irresistible authority to precepts, beauty and excellence to commands, unfading brightness to the crown of glory. He felt that it did for his moral being what no other doctrine could have done; that *without* it he would have been less pure, less holy, less vowed and set apart to God. It enlarged and bettered his nature; it contributed mightily to the supreme end for which the dispensation of the Gospel was alone designed; the extrication of the soul from evil, the regeneration of the soul by new and ennobling principles, and the fellowship of the soul, both here and hereafter, with the Father and with his Son. It was the secret of all his graces; his profound humility, his child-like trust, his reverential gratitude, his meek and lowly patience, his adoring love. "If," says he, in a published sermon, "you deny Deity to Jesus, you do that to Christianity which you would effect in the animal system if you withdrew the blood. You remove the vivid principle which circulates through every part, and which gives and continues animation and vigour to the whole." And only two years before his death he thus wrote. "Ah! what an unspeakable interest and dignity does the divinity of Jesus give to every part of his religion! If there be one attainment to be valued, for its effects, more than

another, I believe it is the attainment of saying unto him, with steady realizing faith, and with spiritual feeling of soul, 'My Lord, and my God.' " Whether right or wrong, such were his convictions; and these convictions he boldly declared. How closely and strongly they had fastened about his heart, several passages in the letters and extracts which I am enabled to lay before the public, strikingly attest.

No man valued doctrines more than he did, as means; no man regarded doctrines less than he did, as ends. It is indeed awful to look at them as ends. They are merely the scaffolding—the building is holiness; and holiness, to speak of it compendiously, is the character of Jesus, is "God with us," inwrought by the creative energy of the Spirit. It was the vital *power* of orthodoxy, not the inert *form*, that Mr. Housman loved and cherished, and sought to extend. For bald literalities of doctrine, for sterile and self-terminating principles, he had neither taste nor feeling. Faith, he knew, is something better than belief; it is belief, adopted by the will, and substantially realized by the affections; belief, operating in the way of moral obedience, loving, diligent, and prompt, and issuing in the habitual practice of righteousness, and the sacred splendour of all holy performances of Christian virtue. Religion, if it is not "heart-work," is nothing but a dangerous mockery; for the grand *object* of the Gospel is moral, and its final appeals are to the moral departments of our being. Mere moonlight knowledge, without warmth, is a perfectly profitless and unproductive possession. *Divine* illumination is never cold.

"The character of a man in the sight of God," Mr. Housman has said, "is not formed by his creeds or notions; but by his dispositions: by the state of his heart. The Devil has knowledge, and a right creed doubtless; but he continues a devil still. Angels have knowledge, but they have something better; they have a right state of the heart towards the Lord." "Mere notions must stand by. The *heart* must move to the cross of Christ; and then, promises, in glorious abundance, crowd around the believer, and pronounce him blessed indeed." "It is our duty, through searching of the Scriptures with diligence, to learn what is truth; but if the knowledge of the truth does not reach from the head to the heart; if it does not lead our *affections* to the Lamb of God, and lead us to *trust*, and *love*, and *obey* him, absolutely, perfectly, and sincerely, our faith is a dead faith, and the truth has not made us free. Opinions must be turned into feelings, before they can either inspire or sustain the life of the spirit. The soul can no more exist upon *notions* than the body can exist upon *the idea of food*." "In the matter of our salvation," it is thus he writes in 1829, "what are mere notions? Let them stand by. The purest creed in Christendom, if it be *only* a creed, can never turn aside the uplifted arm of the destroying Angel, in the day of the Lord's fierce anger. It cannot bring peace of conscience, nor secure forgiveness with God; but will leave, at the last, its unhappy possessor *without* the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem. 'But ye are *come*,' says the Apostle, 'to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling.' 'Ye are

*come.*' Here is movement of the soul, earnest activity of the soul, in approaching Jesus, and the precious blood of redemption. Oh! yes: there must be the heart's *application* to the Saviour for the protection of his blood of atonement; the heart's *reliance* on the blood of atonement as the only Passover; and the heart's *assured expectation*, that through the received atonement all is peace with God. Suffer me to desire that you will commit to memory one short sentence; 'For *with the heart* man believeth unto righteousness.' If you be often remembering this scripture, and praying to know its meaning and its power, you may be receiving a benefit and a blessing long after the tongue which gives you the advice has ceased to address you, and is stifled in the dust."

The same enlarged and spiritual views are still more explicitly unfolded in the annexed passage from an unpublished manuscript.

"The foundation for a sinner, is the foundation of God. It is written, 'The foundation of God standeth sure.' If we compare Isaiah xxviii. 16. with 1 Peter ii, 6. we learn who and what, in the full and strong sense of the word, is *the foundation*. It is Jesus, the Son of God; Jesus, dying, and rising from the dead; Jesus, magnifying the Law, and enduring its curse; Jesus, undertaking to bring many sons unto glory, and to bring much glory to every perfection of his Father. Jesus is the foundation, and the foundation of God. He is the foundation of God—for the *wisdom* of God, in the everlasting counsels, planned the wonderful redemption; he is the foundation of God—for the *love* of the Father gave, as the Saviour of sinners, his

only-begotten Son ; he is the foundation of God—for by the appointment and authority of the Father, other foundation never has been laid, and never will be laid. Upon this foundation are you venturing, resting, building ? MERE NOTIONS ARE NOTHING. A SOUND CREED IS NOT FAITH IN THE HEART. Many will say, 'Christ must save us ; this is our belief'—though they know not who Christ is, nor how he saves, nor what is the nature of his salvation. Be not deceived—no, not one of you. DO NOT MISTAKE OPINIONS FOR PRINCIPLES AND DISPOSITIONS. I MUST TELL YOU AGAIN, AND AGAIN, AND AGAIN, THAT TO BUILD FOR ETERNITY ON THE FOUNDATION OF GOD, IS HEART-WORK. It is the soul, which sees its danger, hastening to the Rock of Ages. It is the soul, which fears an eternal ruin, cleaving to the Son of God ; cleaving with a fixed determination and with *a hearty choice* ; cleaving with a strength sent down from heaven ; and cleaving for a life of safety, for a death of comfort, for an eternity of joy and glory. If these are the affections of your hearts towards the Saviour, you are certainly on the true foundation."

There is no bare-bone theology here. The Valley of Vision is *alive*. The Spirit of the Lord has breathed into the dry and bloodless doctrines the essence of a new and undying existence, and they are now mighty, through grace, to the pulling down of the strong-holds of sin, and to the building up of that spiritual temple in which man shall find everlasting comfort, and God everlasting glory.

At the latter end of the year 1816, Mr. Housman was seized with violent palpitations of the heart, which continued about twenty hours, leaving him

in a very weak and precarious state of health. A letter which he received at this juncture from his Diocesan threatened to re-produce the alarming symptoms. His lordship was "informed" (by whom need not be stated) "that four sermons had been preached in a month, in St Anne's Chapel, by perfect strangers." He did not wish to be illiberal towards others, or unfriendly towards Mr. Housman;" but he must "discharge his duty" by telling his correspondent that he had been "neglectful of his." In conclusion, he cautioned him, or rather expressed a hope, that he should have no further occasion "to animadvert upon his conduct." These remarks had reference to a plan, lately established, of Wednesday evening Lectures, in which Mr. Gathorne, at that time resident curate of Heysham, Mr. W. C. Wilson, and the Rev. John Beethom had occasionally taken part. In consequence, however, of the Bishop's communication the Lectures were afterwards conducted exclusively by Mr. Housman and his curate, until the increasing indisposition of the former obliged him to suspend them altogether. Many years subsequently they were revived.

Though the Bishop's objections and prohibitions seemed to apply almost entirely to a constant and organized plan of admitting strangers, yet, as the letter contained the following sentence, "I must repeat my request that the ministerial duties be regularly discharged by yourself, if in your power; if not, by a licensed curate," Mr. Housman, who had received from Mr. Wilson a seasonable promise of assistance on the following Sunday, felt himself constrained to address his lordship on the matter.

"I have found, through life," he says, in reference to his determination, "that whenever I have been enabled to deny my own inclination, and to act with a scrupulous regard to the dictates of conscience, the Lord's approbation, in some way or another, has been visibly manifested. And in this little instance we shall soon see that minds and events are overruled for good." The letter addressed to the Bishop was as follows. It indicates, plainly enough, the sort of petty annoyances to which Mr. Housman was subject.

"MY LORD.—I am in possession of your Lordship's statement concerning any '*organized* plan of admitting strange preachers' into my pulpit; and to your Lordship's will it is my determination to yield implicit obedience.

"The Sunday duty has lately not only materially affected my head, but has caused my legs to swell in a very unpleasant way. My friend, Mr. Wilson of Tunstal, called upon me yesterday, and I solicited help from him in the afternoon and evening of next Sunday, when I intend to have a collection for the benefit of my Sunday School, which consists of 280 scholars.\* Though I believe that the assistance which I have asked, does not bring the case even to the most distant verge of what your Lordship has prohibited, yet I should not feel comfortable if I did not faithfully detail the circumstance. If your Lordship should object to my receiving the services of my friend, thus accidentally and perhaps seasonably requested, I shall receive by Sunday's mail the communication of your ob-

\* At the period of Mr. Housman's retirement from St. Anne's, in 1836, the number had increased to above 500.



jection, and the assistance will be declined. I would rather be accused of needless scrupulosity in mentioning this subject to your Lordship, than hurt my mind by acting, even ignorantly, in opposition to my diocesan.

"If I hear nothing from your Lordship, my health will probably have that benefit from the assistance of my friend, which I believe your Lordship will wish that it may receive."

Subsequently he took counsel's opinion upon the 50th and 52nd Canons, as to the legal privilege of occasionally admitting a friend into his pulpit. The opinion was favourable.

Times are happily altered now. Unwieldy and obsolete ecclesiastical regulations are becoming powerless to obstruct the free course and progress of the Gospel. Even Bishops, as a body, are beginning to feel, that the letter "which killeth" is subordinate to the spirit "which giveth life;" and that a minister may deliver the message of salvation in a manner acceptable to the God of salvation, though he *does* now and then run foul of Articles and Canons.

The very alarming illness under the effects of which Mr. Housman was suffering when assailed by the agitating epistle of his bishop, is thus alluded to at the close of a letter to Mr. Wilson.

"I must conclude by saying, that during my late severe attack, I discovered that nothing can support, in the near prospect of death, but a realizing perception of the all sufficiency of the work of Jesus, and a consciousness of receiving him with the full consent of the will. This consciousness, if I mis-

take not I was privileged to possess ; and it brought along with it peace. Oh, let us sound it aloud in the ears of sinners—‘None but Christ—none but Christ!’ ”

It was not always thus. In a letter which will be found elsewhere, he informs his correspondent, who was passing through a trial of spiritual darkness, that he himself, on the occasion of a domestic bereavement of the severest kind (the death, I presume, of his first wife) was left, for weeks and months, in a soul-distress approaching to despair. The anguish thus adverted to was permitted to revisit him, though in a mitigated degree, at the commencement of the year 1804, on recovering from a very dangerous attack of typhus fever. His contemplation of the character of God in Christ was perplexed by unworthy misgivings ; a veil of disquieting apprehensions obscured the Mercy-Seat ; and the blessedness which his ministry had so abundantly brought to others, was for a season, at least, denied to him. From this distressing, but by no means unusual experience, however, through the efficacy of fervent and unremitted prayer, he was suddenly delivered on the Easter Sunday of the same year, and no less suddenly admitted to all the riches of the *full assurance* of the mystery which had so painfully disturbed and harrassed his mind. The cloud which had overshadowed him arose unquestionably from physical causes, and was the *natural* consequence of severe bodily indisposition long protracted ; the spiritual comfort which succeeded it, and which never forsook him for a single moment during the rest of his life, but attended him like perpetual sunshine, is attributable to no

power less than his to whom the sublime appellation of "Father of Lights" exclusively belongs.

It appears, from certain letters now before me, that a recurrence of the alarming symptoms which had threatened his health in 1816, and about three years previously, led Mr. Housman seriously to consider the expediency of giving up the Incumbency of St. Anne's, and retiring to some small and easy village cure. "While you, my friend" he says to a valued correspondent, "may possibly be removed from a comparatively contracted to a most enlarged sphere of exertion, the reverse may be appointed to me. The preparation and the strength which St. Anne's requires, seem to be crushing me. The last six months have been most severely felt. If a village church, which would demand but little more than the usual daily stretch of thought should be offered, apparently in the providence of God, as an exchange for my Chapel (the Gospel being faithfully preached to my dear people, being a *sine qua non*), I think that I should see it a duty to accept the exchange." Upon this subject he unservedly opened his mind to an affectionate and zealous friend, who was shortly afterwards enabled to offer him the Rectory of Newbiggin. His attachment to St. Anne's was stronger than he had supposed; and when the idea of breaking the connexion which had subsisted between him and the people of that chapel for upwards of twenty years, assumed the distinctness of a probability, he rejected it at once and for ever, and determined to continue in the vineyard of his own planting, as long as the Lord should see fit to qualify him for the work. The proposed change would have secured to him

the advantages of ease and leisure, at a time when both were greatly needed, without materially contracting his pecuniary resources; perhaps indeed, the difference between the expenses attending a town and a country residence considered, it would have proved advantageous in this respect also. But the offer was declined. Under the date of February 20, 1818, he thus addressed the friend who had conveyed it. "Many thanks for your kindness in mentioning to me the Rectory of Newbiggin. Several times have I even *longed*, if it were the Lord's will, for such a retirement; and probably, before the year is over, if my life be spared, the situation would appear most desirable. But within the last fortnight I seem to be much recruited; and I therefore feel it a duty to cling a little longer to my dear and large congregation. Every Sabbath's exertion is giving a strong blow to my constitution; but, having obtained help from God, I continue unto this day. I must therefore give up the kind offer of Newbiggin."

"Happy the servant of God," says Pyt, in his sketch of the character of Felix Niff, "happy the servant of God, who is in his place; who feels it, and remains there, and has no desire to leave it." Such was the happiness of Mr. Housman. "He found his place, he kept it, he was faithful in it."

Pecuniary embarrassments, in no wise discreditable to *him*, but arising out of circumstances in which he was forced to bear a part, obliged him in the year 1818 to dispose of his property at Acrelands. This lamentable reverse of fortune he sustained without a murmur; and after residing for a few months at Sunderland, a distance of seven miles

from Lancaster, he took up his abode at Greenfield, in the suburbs of the latter place, and continued to live there for upwards of eighteen years. In a note addressed to one of his congregation, and dated October 10, 1818, he alludes to the removal in these words. "This is a changing world. The bounds of *our* habitation are shortly to be removed from Acrelands. I have sold the premises, and we are to have a tabernacle at Greenfield, in the house now occupied by Mr. Rigby. Every movement is of importance. It may have a bearing, either immediately or remotely, on our eternal interests. Hence the necessity of *Prayer*; and the consequent comfort of the promise—'In *all* thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.'"

The generous credulity of Mr. Housman's disposition entirely unfitted him for commerce with the world. That the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked he was well aware; but the kindness and enlarged charity of his own heart invariably sprang up on behalf of those about him, and urged him to hope the best when the worst might well have been concluded. With reference to his Creator, no one knew man better than he did; with respect to his fellow-creatures, a child could dupe him. He knew less of *men* than of *MAN*; and less of man in his moral relations to time, than in his spiritual relations to eternity. The fact is, he distrusted himself more than he suspected others. He was unsuspicious, in spite of experience and common sense. Truthful himself in an eminent degree, he was slow at seeing through a lie; and when he did see through it which was oftener than many persons supposed, he was afraid of *appearing*

to do so, lest after all he might *possibly* be mistaken. He would rather be cheated by a rogue than incur the probability of doing a rogue injustice. Humbleness of spirit, so principal and attractive a characteristic of this simple-minded Christian, accordingly exposed him to much suffering and to great pecuniary loss. The most upright and sincere of beings (for what Archdeacon Churton says of Dr. Townson was true of him—"You would pledge your soul on his sincerity") he was constantly the victim of perfidious dissemblers. "A blunder," says he in one of his letters, "similar to what I have committed a thousand times, renders another long journey expedient. I was satisfied with statements and expressions, instead of *securities*. I know, with some little exactness, what human nature is, and yet I am prone to believe whatever people tell me, and to mistake plausibilities for substantial truth. Whether I shall be ever cured of my folly, is, at the best, problematical." The folly never left him; he trusted and was deceived to the last.

I have slightly adverted in the preceding paragraph to his strict and inviolable regard to truth. This excellence, though not of course peculiar to him, for all Christians possess it necessarily, and many who are Christians only in name, possess it incidentally, was nevertheless exemplified by him in a peculiarly striking way. What Robert Hall said of Dr. Ryland is equally applicable to Mr. Housman. "He would never allow himself to employ those exaggerations and colours in the narration of facts, which many who would shudder at a deliberate falsehood freely indulge; some for the gratification of their passions, or the advancement

of their interests, and others purely from the impulse of vanity, and a wish to render their narratives more inviting, and their conversation more poignant. Whatever [Mr. Housman] affirmed was, as far as his knowledge extended, as certain as an identical proposition; nor was he satisfied with the substantial truth of what he asserted; he was so anxious that the impression he conveyed should exactly coincide, as well in its degree, as in kind, with his internal conviction, that, if it be possible, he was too tenacious of truth, and may be said to have carried his scrupulosity too far. I have often been amused at observing the compass he would fetch, and the circumlocutions he would have recourse to, in the narration of facts, rather than incur the possibility of misrepresentation or mistake." I could give, if it were necessary, some curious instances of his scrupulosity. I have known him to carry it so far as even to reject a figurative expression from a sermon, lest, by transferring to the fact with which it was allied a literally false association, it might damage the fact, and take power from truth.

During his residence at Acrelands, Mr. Housman had been called upon to suffer afflictions of a peculiarly painful nature. The hand of the Lord was heavy upon him, but the Spirit of the Lord was strong within him. Darkness gathered about his dwelling; but the light that shineth in darkness made his home beautiful in the midst of gloom. The Shekinah was never absent, never dim.

Uncomplaining submission to the appointments of heaven was one of Mr. Housman's most eminent virtues. Perhaps few men have attained to a

like degree of resignation. Baxter's faithful aphorism, "*As though wilt, when though wilt, and where thou wilt,*" exactly indicates the quality and extent of his devotedness to the Father of Spirits. "His soul" (to use the startling but significant language of Archbishop Leighton) "rolled itself on God, and adventured there all its weight." He was afraid of nothing but sin; for he knew that everything else, even though it be the keenest sorrow, is mercy and blessing. His acquiescence in the bitter dispensations of his Maker was immediate and was complete. It needed neither forcing nor nursing. It implied an entire and unconditional renunciation and rejection of self; an entire and unconditional subordination, or rather, a perfectly prompt and unreserved surrender, of the whole individual being to the sentiment of creaturely and filial dependence. It was the disposition which Eli manifested; "It is **THE LORD**—let him do what seemeth to him good." It was the disposition which David manifested; "I was dumb, and opened not my mouth—because **THOU** didst it." It was the disposition which the Great Exemplar manifested, when, in the extremity of anguish, and with an ignominious and torturing death before him, he exclaimed, "Not *my* will, but **THINE** be done." Even to those who best knew the habits of his mind, and the intimate terms on which he lived with his Divine Master, it was the subject of constant astonishment and admiration; whilst by those who knew him not, or knew him but slightly, his meek and patient and absolutely *cheerful* deportment under the pressure of calamities the severest that can assail a parent's comfort, (for he seemed



to *love* the rod that smote him) were imputed to the indifference of a cold and apathetic constitution. Never were Nature and Grace so insulted and so wronged. He possessed the kindest, the tenderest, the most sensitive of hearts. It was a heart of even *feminine* delicacy of temperament; so marvellously susceptible of pleasure; so wonderfully alive to the finest vibrations of pain; so averse from wounding the feelings of others; so vulnerable itself. But if it was this, it was also more and better than this. It was a heart, submitted and dedicated to the Lord God; it was a heart, controlled in its best as well as in its worst affections, by the master-principles of faith and love; it was a heart, transformed and strengthened, according to an exceeding great and precious promise, by the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Ghost. Mr. Housman felt like a man, but he endured like a Christian. The discipline was hard; the glory infinite.

"In him," says Mr. Statter, "patience had, if in any one, its perfect work. He not only endured, as seeing him that is invisible, but he gloried in tribulation also. His faith, as his people can tell, always came from the furnace, like gold seven times purified. There he learnt for them his choicest lessons of heavenly wisdom. Hence he was so well able, as most of them remember, to comfort the mourners, to strengthen the weak, to confirm the wavering, to guard the tempted, and to raise the fallen. If his afflictions abounded, his consolations by Christ abounded also, and he was therefore able to comfort them which were in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith he was comforted of

God." Blessed is the congregation whose minister has passed through the fires. In the wise but mysterious providences of God, how strangely the sufferings of *one* are frequently made to promote the happiness of many !

"There is," says he, in reference to the painful visitations of this period, "a near resemblance between the works of God in his creation, and his work of grace in the soul : that is, there is a like kind of design and management in both. For instance: if the air around us, and the waters which are upon the surface of the earth, were always in a still, quiet, and unruffled state, they would become unfit for the purposes of health and life. That their purity may be preserved or restored, they must be agitated by occasional winds and storms. So it is in the spiritual world. The soul seems incapable of flourishing in a perpetual calm. Hence, at the Lord's word, the stormy wind ariseth ; tribulations, of different kinds and degrees, are sent ; bodily sickness, or the sickness or death of friends ; losses, disappointments, persecutions, revilings ; these or other trials, are the tempests appointed by the Lord's wisdom and loving kindness ; and they are commissioned to beat down worldliness in the heart, to dethrone self, to drive away carelessness, to give the believer no rest until he finds it in God his Saviour.

"Oh ! it is mercy—rich, covenant, eternal mercy—when the believer is constrained, by inward or outward trials, or both, to raise a patient eye and a subdued heart unto the Lord and say, ' Whom have I in heaven but thee ?—and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison to thee.' That we have

*bled*, will be a subject of thankfulness and rejoicing in the world of light. We shall *then* acknowledge, whatever may be our feelings now, that we have not had a pang of the wrong kind, nor a pang too many, nor a pang too severe, nor a pang too long continued. What the Lord does, we know not fully now, but we shall know hereafter. One thing I know now—he is doing all things *well*. He is consulting my comfort while he crosses me; and while he is bringing a dark cloud over my earthly prospects, the cloud, like that which guided and preserved Israel in the wilderness, may be a preservation from fatal enemies, and a guide to the Jerusalem which is above. What a time will that be, when the great Shepherd of the sheep, and his ransomed flock, who had been gathered by his mercy, *and guarded by affliction*, shall have met together!—he, rejoicing in his love; and they rejoicing in his glory!”

One of the peculiarly distressing dispensations above alluded to, gave rise to the following beautiful letter to a beloved member of his congregation. It is dated the 4th of November, 1817. The omitted passage refers *particularly* to the cause of his anguish: I shall be pardoned for withholding it.

“MY DEAR E.—As I know that even one line from your unworthy minister, but very faithful friend, will be well and gladly received, that one line shall be sent.

“You will have been informed, long before this, that it has pleased the Lord, in his righteous providence, to permit a very heavy affliction to come upon us. I have been in a hotter furnace, as to this world’s comforts and prospects, than I ever

was cast in before. But I humbly trust that the form of Him who walked with me, was like the Son of God. Want of sleep, and want of appetite, if they had been suffered to continue, would probably, in a very few weeks, have sent my feeble frame to the dust. But I have reason to sing of mercy, as well as of judgment. I have been more quickened, in my own soul, after divine consolations. *The Lord has prevented even a single murmur from arising.* I have experienced an acquiescence in his equity and goodness. I have been enabled to pray, and to hope—yea, and in some degree to expect that the Lord would overrule \* \* The Lord moves in a mysterious way. 'The sin and wandering of Onesimus were so controlled by infinite mercy, as to send him to hear the Gospel, and to hear it savingly, from St. Paul. This affords no encouragement to any to venture upon sin; but it affords encouragement to us to pray that the sin of others may be so overruled.'

*The Lord has prevented even a single murmur from arising!* What a beautiful illustration of exceeding great and precious promises! "The Lord forsaketh not his saints; he preserveth them forever." "They are graven upon the palms of his hands, and are continually before him." "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." "None that trust in *him* shall be desolate." "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee." "I will not leave you comfortless; *I will come to you.*" The blessedness of these most blessed declarations Mr. Housman now abundantly experienced. He was *not* left comfortless; the Lord *did* come to him. Appe-

tite might fail ; but the Lord nourished him with the bread of life, and the water of life. Sleep might depart ; but in the night-watches the left hand of the Lord was under his head, and his right hand embraced him. "Oh that I could tell you," he says, "the ten thousandth part of the exceeding peace and gladness of my soul, as I lay awake in the stillness and darkness of the past night. Of a truth the Lord was with me. I think I never before had such a lively sense of the greatness, and purity, and loveliness, and glory, of God in Christ. My heart was enlarged in a very uncommon degree, and, if I mistake not, in a very uncommon way. Jesus was felt to be 'Immanuel' with peculiar power. Let us, my dear friend, be 'praying alway' for a fuller knowledge, a more confiding belief, a more perfect love of the great God, and for a *closer nearness* to his presence." A few weeks later, he refers to similar manifestations in the following emphatic passage. "Within the last three or four days I have had *such* views of the excellence and glory of Jesus ! I have seemed to see more *into* it than ever. There is no true happiness in this world, but in the nearness of the soul to Christ ; there is no happiness in the eternal state, but in seeing the Lord as he is, and in being like him forever. The beatific vision is Christ. We shall see him *as he is* !—in the perfection and glory of his character. *We shall be like him* !—in the perfection and glory of our own."

Who, after reading these remarkable extracts, will not take up the language of the holy Leighton, and exclaim, "All outward distress to a mind thus at peace, is but as the rattling of the hail upon the

tiles, to him that sits within the house at a sumptuous feast." Truly, to use the words of a greater one than Leighton, *such* peace "passeth all understanding." Philosophy may support, but it is only the religion of Jesus that can console and comfort.

His trust in the constant direction of an all-wise and almighty Providence, of which the foregoing pages furnish many examples, were characterized by none of the rash reasoning, and indefensible presumption or the absurd practical excesses, which have distinguished and rendered both ridiculous and mischievous the faith of many excellent disciples of Jesus. It was rational as well as pious. The industrious use of *means*, on the one hand, and, on the other, patient waiting upon God alone for the final issue, he held to be *equal* duties, imposed no less distinctly by the word of Revelation than by the dictates of prudence; and seeing a MORAL OBLIGATION, he shrunk from the possibility of weakening its pressure by entertaining futile speculations on the compatibility of fixed general laws (which are, in fact, nothing but the *continuous* expressions of the divine mind) with particular and insulated instances of direct divine agency. He acted as if philosophical difficulties had no existence; and to him indeed they had none. He exercised as much care, diligence, and activity, as if there were no such thing as Providence to depend upon; and yet, having done this, he depended upon Providence as entirely and unwaveringly as if he had made no preparations at all. "And this," says Dr. South, "is a rule of practice which will never fail, or shame any who shall venture all they have or are upon it: for as a man, by exert-

ing his utmost force in any action or business, has all that human strength can do for him therein, so, in the next place, by quitting his confidence in the same, and placing it only in God, he is sure also of all that Omnipotence can do in his behalf."

The following passage from a letter addressed by Mr. Housman in the year 1804, to his friend the Rev. Abraham Hepworth, LL. B., (Minister of St. Luke's, Manchester,) bears directly upon this subject. "I have no doubt," he writes "that if you should be forced out of your present situation, another will be provided;—but though resignation to the divine will, patience under his trying dispensations, and dependence upon his providence and grace should be constantly exercised, yet I apprehend that a prudent attention to *means* should not be disregarded. *The difficulty consists in properly balancing exertion and faith.* Oppressive anxiety is certainly forbidden by 'take no thought for the morrow'—'If God so clothe the grass of the field, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith.'—'Verily thou shalt be fed.' "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you."

Twelve years later, namely, in 1816, the same subject is thus treated in a letter to the Rev. W. C. Wilson. "I should be surprised if you did not feel some difficulty in your determinations concerning ———. The COMMAND is gracious, 'In all thy ways acknowledge him;' and the PROMISE is *full of grace*—'And He shall direct thy paths.' But when we have acknowledged God as the wise and sovereign disposer of all persons and events; and prayed most sincerely that our wills may be given up to

his, and that the whole may issue in the enlargement of his Church and the glory of his name; the question arises—In what way, or ways, may we expect that he will direct our paths? We cannot hope for the visible Pillar and Cloud to go before us. We must not, in common cases, look for such a vision as appeared unto Paul; or to hear a voice, saying, ‘Come over, and help us.’ After we have laid our case and our wills at the footstool of the Throne, and earnestly implored, not merely that our *inclinations* may be divinely influenced, but that our *judgments* may be enlightened and guided to a sound and right decision, we may proceed, I presume, though with caution, yet with humble confidence, to our determination.”

Mr. Housman had an equal horror of forcing and of making providences. “Tarry thou the Lord’s leisure,” seems to forbid the one; “My thoughts are not your thoughts,” to reprove the other. A too daring faith is perhaps as bad as a spirit of unbelief.

The value of letters, in a biographical connexion, is exactly in proportion to the insight which they give us into the character and views of the writer. They should supply us with such advantages as an intimate personal acquaintance would have furnished; for the absence of these, no merits of thought or style, however attractive, can compensate. Mr. Housman’s letters, if I do not greatly mistake, accomplish this apparently easy but in reality most difficult and rare object. Produced generally by domestic incidents, and usually by incidents not calculated to excite any degree of interest beyond the particular circles in which his correspondents



respectively moved, they are essentially *individual*; and being written without the slightest prospect of publicity, they are free from the formality and cautious reserve by which all compositions designed for extensive perusal, cannot fail to be more or less distinguished. They reveal *the man*, as his pulpit preparations never could reveal him. They show us what he was *at home*. They open to us the very *inmost* chambers of his heart; and, in doing this, whilst they discover the large and precious amount of human sympathy that lay treasured there, they abundantly attest the subordination of all his feelings, affections, and principles, to the quickening spirit of religious Love. They justify, by a chain of evidence the most beautiful, the remark of one who knew him well and loved him dearly;—"His religion," says Mr. Statter, "was not an *act*, but a *habit*; not an *effort*, but a *nature*." HOLINESS TO THE LORD is inscribed upon all he wrote. The smallest scrap bears this, if it bears nothing more.

Surely it is no light matter to be let into the secrets of the inward life of such a Christian as Mr. Housman; to be admitted to the "sweetnesses and privileges" of those holy recesses in which the glory of the grace of God delighted to abide. Great is the blessing, and proportionately great the responsibility. God grant that the outpourings of the heart and mind of one so near and dear to me, may prove to others what I know they have proved to those for whose use they were originally intended, the means of sustaining and deepening the principles of spiritual prosperity and health. They are the manifestations of a soul which lived with God in the enjoyment of the closest communion, and *for*

him in the exercise of completest dedication ; and I have good hope that a virtue will go out of them, to strengthen the weak, to encourage and warn the strong, to cheer the sorrowful, to bind up the broken-hearted, and to bring glory and honour and praise to Him who is "all and in all."

The four letters immediately subjoined, written from Acrelands, were addressed to one of his most attached friends, then on a visit in Manchester. For this lady, with whom he became acquainted under circumstances of peculiar interest, he entertained the warmest and most brotherly affection. "I know none," he once declared, "upon whom the Holy Spirit seems to have been more richly poured;" and during his last illness, he repeatedly spoke of her in exalted terms. The opinion which he had formed of her when he wrote these letters, he held to the last. "She is a sterling character," were the words that invariably followed the mention of her name.

" November 15, 1817.

"MY DEAR FRIEND.—I was rejoiced exceedingly to hear from Mary B. that your mind was in a state of peace and comfort. What is health, or wealth—what is anything, or everything, beneath the sun—when compared with an experience of the salvation of God ? That salvation he has taught you to thirst after and to relish, and he will not desert the work of his own hands. In a state of comparative ease as to outward things, the soul, even where grace reigns, is too apt to cleave unto the dust. The world, in some shape or another, assumes an undue importance, and the Lord is defrauded of what he justly demands, *the*

*whole heart.* Then mercy interposes. Some painful dispensation is sent. The Lord is in the whirlwind. The slumbering Christian is aroused. He exercises his principles; he calls upon his Lord with renewed vigour; he is heard and answered; and he has to sing of mercy and judgment;—of *judgment*, because he has passed under the rod; and of *mercy*, because the rod has been sanctified. Such, my friend, will be the issue of your present trial. The trial is painful and heavy; but if it be the appointed means of working for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory, there is not a prosperous worldling on the earth but might covet earnestly to exchange situations with you. To be stretched on a couch of anguish, cheered with the occasional presence of the Redeemer, and to have the earnest of everlasting repose in the bosom of God, is to be placed under circumstances, safe to the soul, favourable to fellowship with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ, well adapted to keep the world out of the heart, and heaven in the eye. I have no doubt but if all the friends who love you had possessed wisdom and kindness towards you, *tenfold* more than they do possess, they would have wished you to be just in such a furnace as the one in which you are suffering. The form of him who walketh with you is like the Son of God. You will lose nothing but dross. You will come forth like gold. In order to obtain these blessings, pray that faith may be in constant and strong exercise: faith in declarations that God is Love, and that he delighteth in mercy; faith in the promise 'I will give to him that is athirst;' faith in the assur-

ances of the Scriptures that Jesus is *able* to save unto the uttermost, and that he *will* save all that come unto him. (John vi. 37. Matt. xi. 28.—Rom. x. 13.)

“My subject for to-morrow is Phil. iii. 8; former part. My divisions are two : 1. *The knowledge of Christ.* 2. *The excellency of this knowledge.*

“Our prospects under the late trial are brighter than they were. But my first wishes for my children have long travelled far beyond the limits of this world. If they obtain salvation, through the knowledge of the great Redeemer, it is not of much consequence how they fare in the way to the kingdom.

“It is Saturday, and I must conclude. My poor prayers are offered up, that the Lord may be unto you an everlasting light, and your God your glory.”

“Saturday Afternoon, December 6, 1817.

“MY DEAR FRIEND.—If I could divide myself into two parts, and separate the Old Man from the New Man, I believe that I should speak to you in two very different strains. The Old Man would say, ‘May she, whose friendship has been tried through years, and proved to be genuine, disinterested, and abiding, be speedily restored to health, and pass through a long life without a pain and without a sigh.’ The New Man would say, ‘The Lord is righteous in all his ways, and his dispensations are merciful towards all who have sought him. He has put her into the furnace. He has placed her there for purposes worthy of his infinite and unchanging love. The form of him that walketh with her is like the Son of God. He will manage, with boundless wisdom, the whole process of her

suffering. She will lose nothing, but the dross of sin and of worldly affections. She will come forth like gold. She will shine to her Redeemer's honour—perhaps in the Church below, but certainly in the Church triumphant in glory.'

"Such, my dear friend, would be the different language which nature and grace would speak; and let grace prevail, and nature be silent. To miss a countenance, which, day by day, and year by year, has been turned towards one with looks of benignity and kindness, is a real trial. But I do not repine. The Lord is doing all things well.

"Mary B. read me some extracts from your last letter to her. They rejoiced us both. You seem, through great grace, to have those views and that experience which is all that can be wished for in this world. To see hell, the deepest hell, deserved by sin—and yet to see heaven and all its glories, purchased by our Immanuel, and *promised* to all who have a heart to desire them, and to apply unto him, for them; and to *know* that we desire them, and have come, and are coming, to him for them—this forms a combination of experience, of comfort, of assurance, which almost must annihilate pain, and render the sympathy of friends a needless offering. Go forward, my dear child, thirsting, praying, receiving; losing your will in the will of Jesus; resigning it to him, whether he will send you back again among his people, to tell them how precious is the Saviour in the valley of suffering, or whether he will take you where the inhabitants shall no more say 'I am sick,' but where his compassionate hand will for ever have wiped away all tears from your eyes. If the wish

of my heart could be granted, it would be this; that I, my family, and my congregation, were, at this moment, in the same circumstances, as to pain and consolation, as yourself.

"You are remembered with great kindness by our congregation. They tenderly inquire after you. The Chapel continues full; the Prayer-meetings are crowded. Help us with *your* prayers."

A conviction of the awful responsibility of his engagements, combined with a never-failing sense of his own weakness and insufficiency, led him to attach immense importance to the intercessory prayers of his congregation for the successful administration of the Gospel. These, both collective and individual, he was perpetually craving.—"Help us with *your* prayers" formed one of his frequent requests. "Pray for us," he writes in 1818, "pray for *me*—that I may tell the people, *from very deep and very joyful experience*, that Jesus is a Saviour, and a great one." "Pray for me, my dear friend," he says to another, "that my views may be simple; and that the love of Christ, and the love of souls, may be the grand commanding affections of my heart." And so they were, but he wanted them deepening and confirming; and just in proportion as he attained his wish, did the want grow in urgency, and press upon him more directly. "Give me the benefit of your prayers," he says, in a sermon of 1822; "Pray that the grace of faithfulness may be mine, and the grace of humility and self-distrust. Pray that the strength of Christ may be perfected in my weakness." "The Lord *has* been with us" (it is thus he spoke from his pulpit in 1824) "in

much mercy and power ; and numbers who worshipped here, are now adoring before the throne. May we all follow them, with hearts determined for heaven, with our loins girded, with our lamps burning. My dear friends—I ask your continued prayers. I need them greatly ; I value them highly ; I would bless God for giving me an interest in them ; and in return, I would say, with Samuel, ‘God forbid that I should sin against the Lord, in ceasing to pray for *you*.’” Thus earnestly was he wont to seek and acknowledge the fervent supplications of those among whom he laboured ;—how greatly the sense of his *necessity* affected him, the conclusion of a discourse of 1830 touchingly attests. “Amidst the multiplied uncertainties of this changing world,” he says, “it is highly probable that the place which knoweth us in this house of prayer, may very soon know some of us no more. But we must meet again ; when our opportunities, and privileges, and different talents, must all be accounted for. In the prospect of that final account, I am sure that if there be one present who has more reason than another to smite upon his breast and say, ‘God be merciful to me a sinner,’ that person is he who now addresses you. So much languor when all ought to have been vigour ; so much coldness, when all ought to have been fire ; in saying to the careless, ‘Flee from the wrath to come ;’ in telling the lovers of the present world, ‘The love of the Father is not in you ;’ in proclaiming to the mourners for sin, ‘A Saviour-God invites you to his atonement and his heart ;’ in publishing to all who seek faithfully the joyful tidings from the Lord of all, ‘Ye shall find’—‘ye

shall find mercy and the new heart, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding, and God himself as your portion forever.' Oh! the stupidity of the heart—oh! the stupidity of *my* heart—in feeling a moment's coldness on such subjects as these! But, my dear brethren, there is one hope and consolation both for you and me. 'There is a propitiation with God:' and if we all *flee* to that propitiation, and *cling* to that propitiation, and feel the influence of that propitiation upon our consciences, and our souls, and our lives, we shall be a saved, a joyful, a glorified congregation! Oh! what a meeting!—when pastor and congregation meet together, saved by Immanuel's blood, and glorified by Immanuel's spirit!"

"January 19, 1818.

"MY DEAR FRIEND.—Mrs. W. thought herself at liberty to show me your letter to her. We rejoiced together at the continued and perhaps increasing manifestations of the Lord's love to your soul. You have long heard of Jesus by "the hearing of the ear," and you have had that movement of the heart towards him, in which the essence of saving faith consists, and which brought you within the covenant of grace. You touched the hem of his garment, and you were made whole. But now your "eye seeth him." He has revealed himself to you as he doth not unto multitudes of his people. They are dwelling and thirsting in his outer courts: but you are led into his banqueting house, and his banner over you is Love. By the grace of God you are what you are. I am led to inquire—What will be the end of these dispensations of marvelous mercy? If we were not given to understand that



your complaint is considered as abating, I should have concluded that the Lord, in giving you this high polish, was about to make you speedily "a Pillar" in his Temple above. But his thoughts may not be as my thoughts. He may intend to speak, by his mercies to you, to those around you, whose souls' salvation will be near your heart. He may likewise intend to send you back hither, to bear your testimony amongst us, to the vastness of his grace, to the efficacy of his blood, to the constraining power of his love in winning the heart to himself. But whatever be his intention, it is formed in wisdom, righteousness, and loving-kindness. I long to hear you explain, so far as you can explain, the realizing views with which you have been favoured, and which of them were the most powerful in annihilating all earthly considerations, and in filling you with joy and peace.

"Pray for us. Pray for *me*—that I may tell the people, from *very deep and very joyful experience*, that Jesus is a Saviour, and a great one.

"Give my kind love to Mr. Roby when you see him. If I might venture, without presumption, to associate in any way my name with his, I should think that there is a very close similarity in all our impressions and views of divine things."

He was in the habit of sending packages of his manuscript sermons, when preached, to his absent friends. The following alludes to the practice.

"Tuesday Evening.

"MY DEAR FRIEND.—I intended to have written a letter; and time and some intervening engagements, will reduce my letter to a short note. Though short, it comes from one who is sincere,

and who can rejoice when you rejoice. Your continued supports and consolations give us delight. To see a CHRISTIAN, under *common* circumstances, is to see a great sight. It is to see one whom "God made man" remembered on the cross, and for whom he poured out his sacred blood. But to see a Christian "joyful in tribulation," and glorifying God in the fire, is to see one not only cleansed by divine blood, but sealed, visibly sealed by the Eternal Spirit. Such a rare honour, my friend, is conferred upon you. I shall be glad to learn, through some of our friends here, how you are still carried on, both in body and soul.

"I send you some sermons. *These* are sent, because they are the last preached.

"The Lord shewed mercy to Mrs. Gathorne yesterday forenoon. She has another little girl. Mrs. Housman is of course at Heysham."

His friendly remembrance of Mr. Roby, for five-and-thirty years the faithful pastor of an Independent church and congregation in Manchester, successfully refutes a calumnious assertion to which currency was given about the period of his death, that Mr. Housman's orthodoxy was characterized, and his Christian philanthropy dishonoured, by an intolerant bearing towards the persons of those who differed from him in religious profession. That he did not often co-operate with dissenters is very true; but it is far from being equally true that a principle of uncharitableness mingled with his motives. At all times averse from appearing in public (an indisposition which his warmest admirers cannot deny that he occasionally indulged unduly,) when he *did* appear he naturally preferred being

associated with those who belonged to the church of which he was a minister. This is merely saying of *him* what may be said of all. We like to be surrounded by men of congenial tastes and sentiments, and are liable to think *perhaps too well* of such as think in unison with us. That Mr. Housman, though firmly attached, extravagantly it may be, to the Church of England, (for his reverence was only just "on this side idolatry,") did not permit his regard to preclude the development of affectionate feelings towards seceders from the Establishment, will be sufficiently obvious when I state that some of his oldest and dearest friends were of that number; that his study was resorted to, for purposes of spiritual conversation or counsel, by Independents, Wesleyan Methodists, Quakers, Baptists, and Ranters—such was the general confidence in the catholic temper of his mind; and that for many years previous to the time when he may be said to have retired from the more active exercise of the ministerial office, his house was ever open to the pious of all denominations, when on their journeys in connexion with religious institutions. As an ardent supporter of the Tract Society, and as Senior Secretary of the Lancaster Auxiliary Bible Society, he was necessarily brought into frequent communion with the most zealous of various persuasions; they, if appealed to, will bear ready testimony to the uniform urbanity of his address, and to the Christian sympathy by which his whole conduct upon these interesting occasions was distinguished. Let it be remembered, too, that Mr. Housman, in the true spirit of the faith of Jesus, founded and fostered THE BENEVOLENT SOCIETY—a

society which dispensed, and still dispenses, without the slightest reference to religious distinctions, pecuniary aid to such as need it.

Enough has been said in the earlier pages of this Memoir to show that Mr. Housman's attachment to the Established Church was an attachment based upon sincere conviction; the following passages from one of his published sermons, whilst they confirm this conclusion, exhibit also, on the best authority, the nature and extent of his regard. Fervent as it was, it consisted with a cordial affection for *all*, however designated, who belonged to the household of faith. Dearly as he valued the Established Church, and he valued it intensely, he had read his Bible too often and too attentively not to know, that in Christ Jesus neither circumcision, availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but *a new creature*; and that they who walk according to the apostolic rule, whatever names, whether of obloquy or honour, they bear, are undoubtedly of the Israel of God. The mark of the true discipleship is not external but spiritual. Christ's sovereignty is over *hearts*. The "kingdom" cometh not with observation, but is *within*.

"She" (the English Church) "is, if I do not greatly mistake, not only the eldest, but the most excellent daughter of the Reformation; the rich boon of God Almighty's mercy to the kingdom; the depository of his eternal truth; the guardian of his worship and glory; and at the present time, the object of his peculiar care and love. \* \* Whilst I gladly embrace this fair opportunity of assigning the reasons of my warm attachment to the Church; an attachment, not the blind offspring of prejudice

or habit, but the result of serious and very close reflection; an attachment which has not only strengthened with my strength, but which is gathering fresh strength even in my weakness; I would remember that it is the will of God that Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim. It ill becomes a sinner who lives and breathes daily and hourly through much divine forbearance; it less becomes a believer, who has hope towards God, through a redemption founded and finished in pure and marvellous mercy; it still less becomes a minister of the Prince of Peace—to assail those who profess to fear God, with one word of reproach, or to indulge towards them one feeling of unkindness, or one thought of uncharitableness. Grace be with all them who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, though they move not within our circle, nor bow the knee in our house of prayer. \* \* \* The hour of death, and the day of judgment, are fast advancing. If we take nothing with us into the dark valley, but the *name* of 'CHURCHMAN,' we shall meet nothing better than the sting of death. Unsupported by our formality, and laden with our sins, we shall fall into the hands of the living God. If we carry into the presence of the Judge nothing but a pure creed floating in the understanding, our sentence is recorded—'Depart from me; I never knew you.' Let us then supplicate our God without ceasing, that the doctrines which we profess to receive, may be principles of operation: divorcing us from sin, subduing our worldliness, renewing our souls, preparing us to meet our God; and that the worship in which we join, may be forming us to the taste

and temper of the 'great multitude' who stand 'before the throne, and before the Lamb.' "

Consistently with these sentiments, Mr. Housman regarded sectarian bitterness, whenever it appeared, whether in churchmen or dissenters, with feelings of the keenest regret. "Where is the mind which was in Christ?" he would sorrowfully ask, when instances of theological invective came before him. "If Michael durst not bring a railing accusation against SATAN," (these words he used only a few months before his death) "how dare *we* against our *brethren*? We have enough to do to make men *love* one another. And in an unpublished manuscript the neglected cause of Christian brotherhood is thus beautifully pleaded.

"Wherever Christ is truly loved, there *will* be a love to his people; to all those who, in the judgment of charity, are Christians in spirit and in truth. Real believers are children of one and the same heavenly Father—born of the same Holy Spirit—redeemed by the same precious blood—struggling against the same enemies and snares—and travelling, with the same encouragements and hopes, to the same country of everlasting rest. Thus united in sentiment, plan, and pursuit, they ought to be united in affection. And their Saviour has made this union in affection the badge of their sincerity, the mark of their belonging to him. 'By this,' says he, 'shall all men know that ye are my disciples—if *ye have love one to another.*' It has been the work and the artifice of the Devil, in every age, to disturb, if not entirely to destroy, this harmony and love. St. Paul tells some professors at Galatia, that they were ready 'to bite and to devour one

another;' and he complains, in his second epistle to Timothy, of the evil treatment which he himself had received where he might certainly have expected both support and kindness. Thus it ever has been, and thus it will be, until that blessed period arrives, when Satan shall be bound by the everlasting arm of the Son of God. A disposition to judge with rashness, to condemn without proof, and to revile without mercy, will, in many a melancholy instance, mark those who call themselves the disciples of the meek and merciful Jesus. And many a believer, who is in the habit of bearing his fellow-Christians upon his heart at a Throne of Grace, may have frequent occasion to renew this complaint—'I was wounded in the house of my friends.' What we should inquire is this—do we love, and love sincerely, the people of Christ? Have we that love which hopeth all things; which subdues all bitterness and inclination to reproach; which leads us to pray with affection for *every individual* of the church of God? Let us judge ourselves, that we be not judged of the Lord."

Such was the habitual spirit of this favoured servant of the Prince of Peace. The exclusive tendencies of the *high churchman* were controlled and superseded by the benevolent catholicity of the *high Christian*. "His heart was of no sect." He remembered, in practice as well as in theory, that the English Church, profoundly as he venerated both her discipline and doctrines, is but a *section* of the Church Universal: and he knew that in the Church Triumphant, of which all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity will assuredly form a part, sectional distinctions have no existence. The Lord

God Almighty and the Lamb are the **TEMPLE**, and *the nations* of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it. What a lesson to sectarian bigotry!

But Mr. Housman's philanthropy did not stop here. The sympathies of his nature, enlarged and directed by the benign influences of Christian charity, comprehended (as sympathies, thus ruled invariably will) *the whole family of man*. The extracts which follow—both of them from unpublished manuscripts—not only abundantly corroborate this statement, but bear ample testimony, particularly the latter, to his zeal for the manifestation of practical godliness.

“The most beautiful garment which the Christian traveller, as he takes the journey of life, can wear, and without which he will never be permitted to enter the society of the spirits of the just made perfect, is Love. ‘Above all things,’ says the Apostle, ‘put on Love.’ Every one who deserves the name of Christian, is saved by infinite love; by the love of the everlasting Father who *sent* his Son into the world; by the love of Immanuel, who ransomed their lives from destruction, by giving his own to be the ransom; by the love of the Spirit, who raises the dead in sin, enlightens the darkened mind, subdues the rebellious will, and brings nigh unto God, through the blood of Christ, those who were wandering among the tombs, tormenting and cutting themselves with the instruments of destruction. Brethren—have *you* a hope in this strange love—in this vast miracle of mercy? Hear your Redeemer's voice. He addresses you from his Cross—‘It is finished;’ and from his Throne—‘Above all things put on love.’ If you put on love. your



actions will be *disinterested*; 'let no man go beyond or defraud his brother in *any* matter.' If you put on love, you will *do good* unto ALL men according to your ability and opportunities, 'especially (not exclusively) unto those who are of the household of faith.' If you put on love, you will put off all malice, and envy, and evil speaking. To speak unkindly of others, our fallen natures are wretchedly and continually prone; and I am sure that I can look back with shame upon many an instance of this guilty proneness. But let us watch, and strive, and pray against the abomination. Oh! let us prize and honour the comfort and good name of others, as we honour and prize our own. Let us break no more the law of love; let us no more cast aside the garment of love; let us no more provoke the God of Love. If he whom we abuse or harshly judge, has received repentance and mercy, he is a child of God, and is too sacred an object for the strife of tongues; and if he be going on still in his wickedness, there is misery enough before him—we need not torment him before the time. Oh! may the Spirit of Love rest upon us all. May the sacred badge of the Saviour's redeemed family, be *our* badge—'By *this* shall men know that ye are *my* disciples—IF YE HAVE LOVE ONE TO ANOTHER.' And whenever we are summoned into eternity, oh may the summons find us in the exercise of that sacred affection of love which will exist, and sing, and triumph, when faith will be lost in sight, and hope be swallowed up in full and everlasting enjoyment."

Notwithstanding the self-condemnatory part of this extract, Mr. Housman was wonderfully free

from the sin of detraction. Of vice he always spoke in terms of detestation, sometimes vehemently; of the vicious, more in sorrow than in anger. There are instances, however, in which vice and the vicious are so completely identified, that to censure the one is to censure the other also; and Mr. Housman was not a man to withhold or compromise the truth, from a dread of being deemed uncharitable. Charitableness, in fact, is the hoping all things good in *doubtful* cases—and this he did; uncharitableness, the thinking all things evil in similar circumstances, and this he did not, or did but rarely. It was his weakness to lean rather *too much* perhaps to the former. His hopefulness was often credulousness; and so passed out of the list of the virtues.

The second extract is as follows:—

“ ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself’ is the substance of the second table of the Law; and the Gospel enforces it with repeated energy. But what kind of love, it may be asked, can we feel and cherish towards those who have reviled us and injured us; who are unfeeling, and selfish, and cruel; who are sensual, or deceivers, or malicious; who seem altogether worthless, and distinguished by the most forbidding depravity? I answer: just such a love as God himself felt, when he looked upon our fallen world, and sent his Son to seek and to save us. That love was not and could not be a *love of complacency*; for all in man, as rebellious, was disgusting and horrible. But it was a love of *compassion* and *good-will*. It was mercy, free and full, rejoicing against judgment; making a way, through the blood of the Cross, for the return of

the vilest; and aiming to win the hearts of the most revolted, by showing, through the wonders of Calvary, that God is Love. Christian believers!—though it is yours to feel and to show a peculiar affection for those who love Christ, and bear in some degree his image, and are journeying to his kingdom, yet a vast debt of the love of kindness is due from you to your fellow-sinners in general, whether they be or they be not of the household of faith. There are three duties towards them, in which, through the grace of Christ, you should ever seek to be found.

“First; *you must abstain from injuring their good name.* When you forge a slander, or when you circulate a slander, the iniquity is much the same. A wound is inflicted on a neighbour’s character and comfort. The golden rule is broken—‘Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.’ A disposition is indulged, as opposite to the mind of Christ as Christ is opposite to Belial. The authority of God is set at naught—for that authority has said, ‘speak evil of no man:’ and the Scriptures proclaim terrible things to the slanderer. It is written, ‘Nor *revilers* shall inherit the kingdom of God.’ Brethren, whenever a word to the disadvantage of another is ready to fall from our lips, let us instantly remember three very awful truths—that Christian love is at that time far from us; that we are on the very brink of rebelling against the will of God, clearly and positively made known; and that we may be fearfully interested in such a solemn scripture as this, ‘Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I destroy.’ It was beautifully said

by a great man concerning a deceased minister, 'He loved mankind too well to speak evil of them.'

"But in enforcing the duty of Christian love, I specify a second duty. *Do good unto all men, even as you would they should do unto you.* This implies, that in all your transactions *with* them, integrity and righteous dealing should constantly preserve you; and that in all your communications *to* them, the law of unbending truth should constantly dwell upon your lips. This implies, that if *they* be in necessity, and *you* have this world's good, you should open your hand wide to your poor brother; and where will you go in a sinful world like ours, where there is not some misery to be relieved, some tear to be wiped away, or some mourning heart to be comforted?

"In the third place—pity, and pray for, and be kind unto those of your fellow creatures who are still walking in spiritual darkness, and dwelling in the land of the shadow of death. Be it so, that they have insulted you, or injured you, or slandered you, and persevered in spitefully using you. Look at them in their true character and condition. Whatever be their outward circumstances, they are impenitent and without Christ, and living and moving under the anger of God. Carry your eye forward. They have to endure the agonies of death, and of death without hope, if they shall not previously have obtained repentance and mercy. View them amid the horrors of a lost eternity, just as the word of God describes the eternity of those who have died in their sins. Take these views by a realizing faith; and compassion, I am sure, will crush every rising of anger, and you will send up

your intercessions to the God of all mercy, that, for the sake of Jesus, he would pity and pardon, and renew them, and number them with his saints in glory everlasting. In these and the like exercises and habits of the soul consisteth the love of our fellow-creatures; and this generous disinterested love of our fellow-creatures is one high branch of Christian holiness."

For the length of these passages I offer no apology. They relate to a subject of paramount importance; to a subject equally important with that of love to God; or rather, to a different expression of the *same* subject. The two precepts meet in very beautiful connexion. If it be true that one of the best proofs of love to God is brotherly love, it is no less true that one of the best proofs of brotherly love is love to God. The former position applies the test of philanthropy to Christian profession; the latter, the test of Christian principle to philanthropy. I wish I could be persuaded, on sufficient evidence, that love to man, as a co-equally indispensable duty with love to God, is not grievously neglected even by those who aspire to a cordial performance of the other. The history of sects, the history of parties, unhappily forbids the persuasion. Good old Henry Venn felt this when he said, "The great depravity of man is indifference to his fellow-creatures; yet how seldom do books, or sermons, or serious people, urge the point with earnestness! How many thousand prayers have I put up that I might love God, and be delivered from the curse and from the power of sin! How few that I might love my fellow-sinners!" "I would as willingly," said Baxter, "be a martyr

for charity as for faith." Is this the prevalent feeling now? Can *we* say as much? I fear not. We should be called latitudinarians if we did. In overt acts of toleration we shame our predecessors; in the divine science of brotherly love (with which, rightly understood and rightly developed, toleration is scarcely less incompatible than intolerance, being, in fact, precisely the same thing modified) how inconsiderable our advances! It is notorious, that "love of the brethren," whether within or without the household of faith, is not even *professed* as it ought to be. It is professed timidly, and subordinately, and without heart. Wanting the *certainty* of a principle, it wants the *efficacy* of a principle. We insist too rigidly upon *opinionative* unity, to be united in spirit. In the exercise of a proud and petrifying egotism, we make *conformity to ourselves* the ground and condition of brotherhood. We require men to *think* as we think before we love them. For that which is impossible, a unity of intellectual conviction, we are ready to contend even unto death; whilst in respect to that which is attainable, a unity of charity, (a unity incumbent upon us, for it is moral) we display the most lamentable and culpable indifference. Yet love—love to God as God, and love to man for God's sake—is the sum and substance, the life and essence of pure religion, as well as the divinest testimony of its unearthly origin. The deadliest of heresies is the want of love. It is the unloving who are Anathema Maran-atha. Love is the sweetest and grandest power in the universe. God is love; and to be filled with all *his* fulness, what is it but to be filled with love? Theories are no-

thing, if they do not lead to love. Love, consistently with the whole tenour of God's dealings with us, and particularly so with the character of Jesus, is superior both to Faith and Hope. Charity is the greatest, because she embodies in herself the attributes of the other two cardinal graces. She *believeth* all things; she *hopeth* all things. She loves God, and is loved of him; and, eager to imitate his benevolence and beneficence, her love is diffused, with ungrudging liberality, over all his creatures.

Many of the letters in the following collection, and some of the extracts, were written to two ladies, the daughters of one of Mr. Housman's oldest and most constant friends. How dearly he regarded them will abundantly appear in the course of the correspondence: how *worthy* of his regard they were, is known to Him alone, who, in the inscrutable appointments of a providence that cannot err, has seen fit to prepare them for a happier and nobler state of being by long continued and most afflicting bodily indisposition. Addressing one of the brothers in 1824, it is thus that their affectionate pastor and spiritual parent writes. "I fear that your two dear sisters are not in any measure recovered from their sickness. The ways of the Lord are indeed mysterious, in laying aside from active usefulness two such Christians. But they can, and they do glorify God in the fires, by their patient suffering; and when patience has had its perfect work, they will come forth like gold. We should always remember the saying of good Matthew Henry, 'That is best for us, which is best for our souls.' When the judgments of God are made manifest, the two sufferers will feel and exclaim, "He *hath* done all things well.'"

"MY DEAR E.—The seraphic Hervey has observed concerning solitude, 'this is the place where I may with advantage apply myself to subdue the rebel within, and be master, not of a sceptre, but of myself.' With the advantages of solitude my dear child is now privileged. Unincumbered with the cares of the world, and secluded from its bustle, you can enjoy the comforts and the benefits of being alone; and avoid its usual concomitant inconveniences, by relaxing, whenever you like, in the unreserved intercourse of an united family. Thus favoured, what a tall Christian shall we expect to see when you revisit Lancaster! We shall look at your countenance, that we may observe its shining.

"But situation cannot do everything. It is well that it cannot. If it could, with such hearts as ours, it would soon rob God of the glory of his grace. With an impious idolatry we should be ascribing every right frame or feeling of the mind, to quiet, and woods, and valleys. But we are taught, again and again, to know, that externals have not any mighty power, either to give or to take away peace. Yet seclusion, if sanctified, can bring many a blessing. You can walk into your shrubbery—you can take a leaf; you can apply the microscope. You can observe its veins and arteries, and a most wonderful mechanism which gives it its colour and its use. The whole is intended as a manifestation of the divine wisdom, goodness, and power; and wherever the Lord is beheld and adored, there is elevation and peace. You retire from your garden to your chamber. There you open another book besides the book of nature. With the aid of a better instrument than that of a microscope, even



the instrument of a realizing faith, you can look at the things which are not visible to the mortal eye. You can penetrate into the *interior* of what is revealed. You pierce far deeper than into the true meaning of the text. You behold the mind and the perfections of the Great God. You behold righteousness and mercy circulating through every vein of the Bible. And when you can truly discern the glory of the Lord in the face of Jesus Christ, you have not a wish at the time to see more. The view satisfies, exhilarates, sanctifies. It brings along with it its own evidence that it came from heaven ; and it is accompanied by a blessed consciousness, that it is exciting those dispositions of the heart, which could relish, and which are preparing for, the peculiar felicity of the saints in glory. Ah ! what could we do without Faith ? Well indeed is it called 'precious faith.' It is precious, whether we consider it as "the evidence of things not seen;" as the telescope of the soul, by which divine things are beheld in their truth, and excellence, and order, and harmony; or whether we consider it as that disposition of the heart, by which we receive and repose on the Redeemer for his mercy; or whether we consider it as that principle which leads us, in the exercise of prayer, to be looking to the gracious Head of the Church for those supplies of his Spirit which we daily need, and which we had been imploring.

"On looking at what I have written, I see that I shall send a sermon instead of a note. Have I copied Er's occasional abstraction from worldly persons and worldly things, and mistaken one thing for another ?

"But whether note or sermon, it must be concluded. And shall I, like a young lady whom I could name, travel as far as the frigid zone in search of a conclusion, and say, 'yours most sincerely?' I will ask counsel of one nearer home. I will consult an inmate, which, though treacherous and deceitful enough in matters of eternal moment, is tolerably correct upon other points. That inmate says, 'Subscribe yourself dear E.'s very faithful and very affectionate friend.'"

"Saturday, July 11, 1816.

"MY DEAR E.—Having heard of your kind father's indisposition, I had intended to make inquiries concerning him, but your very welcome note renders it unnecessary. I hope that his recovery will be rapid and confirmed, if the Lord will: or that it will be sanctified to us all, if that will should be otherwise. 'For *us* they sicken.' The illness of a dear friend or relative, teaches us many a lesson: but may not the Saviour say concerning us—'O fools, and slow of heart to believe.'"

"You say nothing concerning your health: I shall retaliate, and say nothing concerning mine. I will do as I ought to do—return good for evil. Through mercy, I am tolerable, though I was sadly shattered last Sunday. The whole duty, including the Sacrament, rested on my feeble shoulders, on my feeble head, and on my worse heart. But having obtained help from God, I got through the whole; and from what I have heard, I hope some good was done. Pray for me, my dear friend, that my views may be simple: and that the love of Christ, and the love of souls, may be the grand commanding affections of my heart. You will

keep close, my beloved child, to a throne of grace—Remembering the promise in Rom. x. 13.”

“ July 18, 1816.

“ MY DEAR E.—I send you a sermon, without its companion. The companion has not been preached in public, because Mr. B. preached in the afternoon. As the way to Silverdale, for my poor compositions is through the pulpit of St. Anne’s, you must wait another week.

“ The Lord has had mercy in restoring to you your valuable father. You will pray to *see*, and to *feel*, and to *adore*, the mercy. Heaven is a place of enjoyment, *because the glory of the Lord is there manifested in full brightness* ; and the clear knowledge of his perfections and character, and the affections excited by the knowledge, give the joy. ‘ Absent from the body, *present with the Lord* ;’ ‘ *We shall see him as he is.*’ These are the Scripture accounts of heavenly bliss ; and in proportion as we can here obtain spiritual views of the Lord’s dealings, and of his equity and mercy in *all*, we learn his character and find enjoyment. Let us pray for the Spirit’s light, and the Spirit’s power, and we shall be blessed with *foretastes*.”

In the formation of the Auxiliary Bible Society, which took place in August, 1816, and which he was chiefly instrumental in introducing into the town, Mr. Housman bore a prominent part. For some time previous, deeply feeling the importance of a general distribution of the word of God, and especially of its being carried to those who could not afford to obtain it out of their own precarious and contracted resources, he had been in the habit of dispensing gratuitously, in conjunction with a

few benevolent members of the congregation of St. Anne's, copies of the New Testament among the necessitous poor of Lancaster and its vicinity. The funds with which these precious books were purchased, arose from the ready and extensive contributions of his affectionate people, one of whose most admirable characteristics undoubtedly was, and indeed continues to be, a prompt acquiescence and an energetic co-operation in any project that contemplated the advancement of the temporal or spiritual interests of their fellow-creatures. Soon after the establishment of this excellent Society here, the Committee determined, in direct contravention of one of their own resolutions, to suspend the very laudable practice of supplying the oracles of life without money and without price—a decision that occasioned Mr. Housman unfeigned regret and pain, and led to his temporary secession, as Senior Secretary, from the Institution. In answer to a letter from the Rev. W. C. Wilson, in which that gentleman seems to have judiciously suggested the dangers likely to accrue from disunion among the supporters of an Association, the very nature and object of which provoked a sufficient amount of obstruction from without, the minister of St. Anne's addressed to his friend the following explanatory communication. It is truly characteristic of the writer, in whom inflexible fidelity to convictions was uniformly softened and graced by the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit.

“MY DEAR WILLIAM.—I should regret, most sincerely and deeply, any circumstance which might affect the prosperity of the Bible Society here. My secession *for a time*, will do no such thing. It will

have a contrary effect. It will assist in bringing some well meaning, but I think very positive young men, into a temper of conciliation; and thus remove from the minds of some liberal contributors a disgust against their very contracted proceedings. I will briefly state three things.

"1. I continued to act with the Committee *every committee night*, with the exception I believe only of one, until I found that a Resolution, which had been carried by a majority, concerning the supply of the *necessitous poor* gratuitously, was to be resisted and evaded in every possible way. Within the last two months, a near relation of a leading person in the Committee, and who was certainly the organ of her relation, stated in a company of my friends most positively, that *no Bibles would be given*. To act therefore with a body which would not be governed by its own resolutions, is impossible. It will be said — 'But if the poor had applied, their cases would have been considered.' Their application was altogether precluded by the impression made upon their minds that they must either pay for the Scriptures or go without them. Not one of them, I believe, was told that there was any possibility of receiving a Bible, however great their necessities, without money.

"2. *I could not attend without being engaged in perpetual altercation upon the point*. More than one of my friends has occasionally been thus engaged since the commencement of the Institution. A minister should not be implicated in these disputes. He may be betrayed into an unbecoming warmth of temper.

"3. *The poor under our own eye are most particularly thrown upon our protection and bounty by the*

*wise providence of God.* They are our own 'house,' for which we are to 'provide.' Their situation here is most calamitous. Many of them are *entirely out of work*, and their children are half starved. Many of them are upon the parish. Some of them are borrowing the pennies which they subscribe, and many can raise their pennies no longer. To co-operate, then, in a system which will not carry *freely* to these poor creatures that blessed book which can direct their eyes and hearts to a better world, appears to me to be morally and religiously wrong. But they must and shall be provided for. If the Bible Society will not do it, my congregation will. I delay a collection until after the Anniversary, and for two reasons, as I have told the Committee in a note to Mr. Welch; because, first, a congregational collection might in some measure affect the annual subscriptions to the Auxiliary; and secondly, the new Committee may see it expedient to search out the poorest of the poor, and give them the word of life 'without money and without price.' In this case I will instantly co-operate with them, *heart and hand*; no congregational collection will be necessary; and a complete union between all parties will be effected.

"You will see from this plain statement, that there wants nothing to restore perfect cordiality among the contributors to the Society but a disposition in the Committee to act with decision and liberality, according to a resolution which already stands upon its books.

"If 'patience' and 'self-denial' would have availed in this concern, I hope that I should have been abled to practise them; but you now see how the

matter stands. I shall not only continue my subscription, but I have exerted, and shall exert, my little influence to prevent any subscriber from withdrawing."

The following is a copy of the letter to Mr. Welch, at that time Secretary of the Lancaster Auxiliary Bible Society.

"August 18, 1817.

"MY DEAR SIR.—I am sorry that I must decline taking any measures concerning the intended Anniversary of the Lancaster Auxiliary Bible Society; and I am sorry that I have to request that you will erase my name from the list of Secretaries. I will honestly state the reasons.

"You know that before the formation of the Lancaster Auxiliary Bible Society, the Committee of St. Anne's had been distributing the Holy Scriptures gratuitously for several years, and I believe, to the comfort, and I hope to the benefit, of several hundred persons. When I gave up this confined and local plan of operation, on the formation of the Auxiliary, I did not expect that the poor of the town and neighbourhood would be placed in a worse situation as to receiving the Scriptures, than they had been while under the care of our Chapel Committee. So soon as I had reason to fear that this might be the case, I proposed a motion, which, after a considerable discussion, was carried by a majority of the Auxiliary Bible Committee, that the necessitous poor should, under certain regulations, still be the objects of gratuitous distribution. I supposed that all opposition to this point, and all debate upon it, were precluded by the vote which had been passed. But if I am not incorrectly in-

formed, much impediment has been thrown in the way of this free and liberal grant of the word of God. I lament the circumstance on many accounts. I lament it, because the situation of the poor has been, and still is, calamitous in the extreme. Many of them *are out of employment*, and their children *have not half a sufficiency of bread*. Many of them are compelled *to seek parochial relief*; and some of them are actually obliged *to borrow the pennies* with which they subscribe. It does not appear to me that any one of these classes should have been permitted to subscribe. I lament the circumstance, because many subscribers are grieved and disappointed by the mode which has been exclusively adopted; especially, since the application perhaps of one-sixth, but certainly of one-third part of the contributions, would have been quite sufficient for local purposes, and would have prevented much disunion. I lament it, because I cannot with comfort co-operate (beyond my individual subscription) in the prosecution of a system, by which the necessitous poor of our town and neighbourhood are virtually prevented from receiving the Scriptures. These poor are *peculiarly* thrown, in the providence of God, upon our notice and our bounty. I am aware that it has been said, 'If the poor had made application, their cases would have been attended to.' I answer—they were never encouraged to make application. An impression was made upon their minds, that they could not have the Scriptures without purchase.

"As I consider it a duty, from which I will not and dare not shrink, to form, a plan, by a congregational collection, to supply the very necessitous



poor with the Bible gratuitously, yet I shall postpone the execution of my plan until the Anniversary on the 4th of September is over. I postpone it for two reasons; first, a congregational collection at St. Anne's might affect the subscriptions to the Bible Society, and this circumstance I should wish to avoid; secondly, it is possible that a new Committee, if a new Committee should be formed, may see it expedient to search out the poorest of the poor, and convey to them, in their present necessities, the Scriptures of Truth, 'without money and without price.' I should rejoice if such a resolution were adopted. I would join them heart and hand. No congregational collection would then be necessary; but such a union would be effected, as I believe, would establish the Bible Society on a permanent basis.

"I have great pleasure in inclosing my annual subscription for the next year."

Whether the Committee were right or wrong in stopping the supplies of the necessitous poor, may perhaps be a question; there can be none, I presume, respecting the obligation that lay upon them either to comply with their own resolutions deliberately framed and formally established, or, if compliance had become inconvenient, to repel them. Mr. Housman's retirement was but of short continuance.\*

\* At the close of the Twenty-Second Annual Report, read at a public meeting held in the Friend's Meeting House, on Friday evening, June 8th, 1838, just and honourable mention is made of the venerable subject of these lines. The Report is understood to be the composition of the Rev. Samuel Bell.

"On reviewing the events of the past year, the Committee feel that they ought not to conclude this Report without recording

The sentiment expressed under the second head of the first of these two characteristic epistles, was with Mr. Housman a sentiment of powerful and habitual operation : and to its salutary prevalence may doubtless be attributed much of the success of his prolonged labours in the Church of Christ. Entertaining an unconquerable horror of retarding

their sincere tribute of respect to the memory of one whom they had to follow to his 'long home' a few weeks ago ; and who, when living, was a warm and faithful friend and supporter of this institution. The late Rev. Robert Housman was among the principal agents in establishing this local Auxiliary. For the protracted period of 21 years, he held the office of Senior Secretary : and not till he began to sink under the infirmities of old age, did he relax in his zealous efforts to promote its important objects. Knowing by personal experience that 'the Holy Scriptures are able to make wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus,' his attachment to the Bible Society was based upon firm and settled principles, so that it could neither be weakened by lapse of time, nor shaken by any appearance of adverse circumstances. And that holy Book, which he was anxious to circulate among his fellow mortals, as a 'lamp to their feet, and a light to their path,' to conduct them to Christ, to God, to happiness, and to heaven, he himself highly valued and diligently pursued, as being 'profitable for doctrine and reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness.' In its sacred contents he searched as for hidden treasure, and discovered there a mine of wealth unspeakable and inexhaustible. Throughout its wide and extensive field of promise, he roamed with ever new delight, and found them to be 'exceeding great and precious.' From its kind and gracious assurances he derived 'strong consolation' in the midst of severe anguish and heavy affliction. And its divine truths, which shed rays of glory around his dying pillow, became the strength of his heart and the stay of his soul, whilst his earthly house of this tabernacle was dissolving. For him to live was Christ, and to die, gain. His end was peace. He has entered into rest. The blessedness of those who die in the Lord, is his inheritance and enjoyment. But his works survive him. Though dead, he yet speaks by this Society ; and his language is 'take care, that whilst you give the Bible to others to feed upon, you prize it yourselves, and make it the food of your own immortal souls.' 'Be ye ready also, for in such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh.'"

the progress of the Gospel by weakening the moral influence of its professed ministers (whom, with Jeremy Taylor, he regarded as "the choicest of God's choice, the elect of his election, a church picked out of the church") he judiciously abstained from participating in any transactions, however reputable in themselves, which might excite dispositions, and betray him into a line of conduct, at variance with the pacific spirit of his faith. "Wist ye not that I must be about MY FATHER'S business?" implies the constraining principle of his daily and hourly life; and this business he sought to prosecute with the diligent gentleness of "the glorious Nazarene." Party-politics, the most prolific source of personal and relative discomfort, were of course conscientiously avoided. Probably no clergyman ever mixed in them without being the worse for his meddling. They have slain, and are still destroying their thousands. They may sharpen the intellect, and give an edge to the disputatious faculty, but they blunt the heart. They have a petrifying, secularizing tendency, and lead to practical atheism. They more frequently break than rivet the bonds of human brotherhood; for they exalt opinions above affections. "A minister's business," says Mrs. Housman, in one of her letters to Miss Coltman, (and her views were usually those of her husband,) "is with the Gospel of Peace. 'Christ and him crucified' is all that he should be determined to know; for when he begins to interfere with other matters, the glorious cause intrusted to him generally suffers loss. The Saviour's rich legacy, was 'MY PEACE I give unto you,' and he intended the gift no doubt to be an

entailed possession. How lamentable, when his disciples alienate the hereditary treasure, and instead of faithfully conveying it, and diligently dispensing its blessings, cut off the entail, and stir up strife and discord!" Doing the work of an evangelist, Mr. Housman, no less positively than his wife, held to be perfectly incompatible with doing the work of a busy political partisan; and the history of Lancaster during the declining years of his life, unhappily afforded abundant confirmation of the truth of his conviction. Deploring, not long before his release, the proneness of the clergy to engage in the unholy wars of faction, he remarked, that for *his* part he should prefer to imitate John Newton, who used to say, during the progress of the French Revolution, "that people were continually talking of Democrats, Aristocrats, Autocrats, and various other kinds of *Crats*, but that *he*, if they would only let him have his own way, would live and die a *Quietcrat*." Would to God that *all* churches abounded more in Quietcrats! They *will*, when the grace of Christ abounds more.

To what are called "religious controversies," in which Satan generally gains more than God, Mr. Housman entertained nearly as strong an objection as he did to political party conflicts. He felt with Baxter, that "while we wrangle here in the dark we are dying, and passing to the world that will decide all our controversies, and the safest passage thither is by peacable holiness." Some of the lamentable consequences of theological contentions, he has pointed out in the following extract. "The attention of the infidel has been arrested by this

unchristian bitterness; and having compared the conduct with the rule, the temper with the doctrine, the professor with the Bible, he has turned aside with equal derision and disgust from the shameful inconsistency; he has become *confirmed* in the errors which perhaps an affectation of singularity first led him to adopt, and he has reviled and opposed Christianity itself, when his opposition and invectives should merely have been directed against its angry advocates. Ye furious disputants—ye defenders of the faith but destroyers of peace—ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of, nor can you estimate the evil to which you may conduce. Where the grand principles of the Bible—the guilt, the weakness, and the ruin of man; the love, the truth, and the preciousness of the Saviour; who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; where these principles are maintained with meekness and yet with firmness, are felt in the conscience and evidenced in the conduct, there is ‘the spirit of glory and of God;’ there is a soul for which the Saviour withheld neither his interposition nor his life; and there surely is an object too dignified to be insulted by our reproaches, too closely allied to the common friend and father of his people, to be wounded by our unkindness.” “These angry disputants,” he elsewhere says, “have need to be reminded, that, whilst they contend earnestly for the faith, without forbearing one another in love, they undermine the cause they mean to support; they sacrifice the beauty and the comforts of godliness to the pride of party; they exhibit religion, not as ‘altogether lovely,’ but in a state of mutilation, deformity, and

disgust; they strengthen the hands of infidelity, which they seem desirous to enervate; and, to say all in a word, they betray their Master with a kiss." He felt, and he often acknowledged, when the rampant zeal of intolerant theologians disturbed his dwelling with the sound of its ungracious discord, that the most effectual way of arresting the progress of error, is, not to oppose the evil in an attitude of fierce defiance, but to instil with equal fidelity and affection, the counteracting influences of truth. A long and abundant experience had taught him that prejudices are seldom overcome by direct attacks of irony or anger; and that dogmatical damning is not the best method of winning souls. He had lived to see and to feel, more distinctly, more sincerely, the beauty and the power of the law of love begetting love—the grand centre-law of the moral system of the universe, and the foundation-principle of the Gospel of Redemption—and had yielded himself, with a hearty and an entire surrender, to its mild and humanizing constraint. "Love," says Mr. Simeon, "is the universal conqueror;" Mr. Housman found it to be so.

Though *constitutionally* warm and hasty tempered, the venerable subject of these memoirs may be said to have attained, through grace, to an unprovokable spirit. The religion of Jesus, had *sweetened* his nature as well as elevated it: impressed it with gentleness, as well as informed it with power. He was emphatically a man of peace. "I appeal to all who were in the habit of conversing with him, and who really knew his character, if I am not fully justified in using that term. There was something in his manner and appearance, nay, even in

the very sound of his voice, which spoke of peace; all was calm and quiet around him and within him; the world, with its noise and restlessness, was ever shut out; he heard of it only as we hear the roar of the stormy ocean, borne to us by the wind from afar; he had no heart for its turmoils, no hand in its schemes, and seldom turned so much as a look towards its commotions. The same stillness prevailed in his dwelling which reigned in the mind of its owner; his was a calm which seemed to spread itself from his own heart to the hearts of those with whom he held converse. I do not think that the most ruffled spirit could have remained in his presence without being tranquillized; there was a serenity in his manner which would have acted as oil on the troubled waters; all that was disturbed and violent would, if brought in contact with one so placid, have died away. There is a peace which the world giveth, and which they that are of the world enjoy; there is a peace which a naturally placid temper gives; and there is a peace which arises from mere outward prosperity. Sadly indeed do they mistake, and awfully will they be deceived, who suppose that a state of mind so low, so earthly, and so unspiritual, will bring a man peace at the last! But how different was that peace which he of whom I speak enjoyed! It sprang from far other sources; it rested on quite another foundation; it had respect to a far other recompense;—it had, as I firmly believe, the Holy Spirit for its author, Christ for its rock, and Heaven for its end.” Such, on the authority of Archdeacon Lear, was Bishop Burgess; such, too, precisely such, was Mr. Housman. The portrait might have been *intended* for both.

The next letter, addressed to one of the beloved young friends before mentioned, is without a date; but the hand-writing seems to prescribe for it a place in this part of the memoir.

“ Saturday Morning.

“The sight of a note from my dear E. always gives me pleasure, though the communication in your last excited feelings very opposite to delight. Judging and expecting according to my sanguine disposition, I had concluded that our beloved E. would have been so recruited by the air of Silverdale, and by exercise on her pony, that she would have returned to Lancaster in October, comparatively robust. But the recurrence of the violent pain in her head seems to preclude any confident expectation of such a result. But she is in wise and gracious hands. The furnace in which infinite mercy continues her, will not be heated the thousandth part of a degree beyond what will subserve to her best interests, and to the brightening of her immortal crown. I am disposed to grieve at my inability that I cannot restore her health; but perhaps, if I could do it effectually, I should injure her soul: ‘These are they which came out of great tribulation.’ Present to her my very kind love, with very cordial wishes that Grace, Mercy, and Peace may rest abundantly upon her.

“One part of my dear E.’s note informed me that she was well: another part seemed to intimate that she did not look altogether strong: you must inform me next Saturday concerning both E. and yourself. I write in great haste, having been much engaged during the week, and having the greatest part, or rather almost the whole, of to-morrow’s ser-



mon yet to write. I was sorry that the concluding sermon on the Transfiguration could not be sent last Saturday; but Mrs. Housman had promised it to Mrs. H., and it is now at Manchester; when it is returned, it shall visit my beloved freinds at Silverdale.

“Last evening our anniversary of the Bible Society was held in the National School for Girls. The room was crowded, and the meeting was very interesting. Farewell.”

The following note (sent with some manuscript sermons) though unusually brief, exhibits Mr. Housman's character with singular exactness. Within the compass of a dozen lines, it represents him, as an attached and affectionate pastor, and as a faithful, humble, and *entirely* devoted Christian. Miniatures like this are invaluable.

“Saturday, August 23, 1817.

“MY DEAR E.—Miss B. continues another week, or perhaps ten days, at Sunderland. She is looking well. I left the family last evening to attend to my larger family at St. Anne's. It has devolved upon me to transmit the inclosed. Partiality will favourably receive them, and a heavenly agent can abundantly apply and bless them. What a thought!—that the grace of Christ can be magnified in human weakness.

“Press forward, my dear child; for THE CROWN OF LIFE will be found worthy of the *whole* exertion of *all* the powers of the soul.”

“Friday, September 29.

“MY DEAR E.—You ask from me a note, that is, a short epistle. But is it wise to ask from *me* a *short* letter, when you can have many *long* ones

from St. Peter and St. Paul? *I* can tell you that *I* love you; *they* can assure you that the *Lord* loves you. *I* can say that *I* am a poor changeable being; *they* can comfort you with the tidings that *the Saviour* 'changeth not.' *I* must inform you if *I* would be honest, that whatever be my inclination to help and bless you, my means are scanty, and my ability is nothing: *they* can remind you that unto your Immanuel 'all power is given, in heaven and in earth.' *I* must say that *I* am a dying creature, and that even my wishes for your spiritual health and consolation must soon be stifled in the dust; *they* can revive you with the intelligence that Jesus 'ever liveth' and ever liveth 'to make intercession' for you, while you are on the earth, and ever liveth to lead you unto living fountains of waters in the everlasting kingdom. *I* say then, is it wise to repair to a scanty, muddy, and scarcely discernible rivulet, when at any moment you could come to a clear, refreshing, perennial spring, and drink and rejoice for ever? But if *I* should hear, or fancy that *I* heard it said, 'If thou art without sin in this respect, take up a stone and cast it at E.," my conscience would scarcely suffer me to take up one even as small as a grain of sand. Alas! through life *I* have been but too prone to attach an undue degree of importance to, and inordinately to expect comfort from, the creature, in the form of family and friends. *I* speak of a *proneness* to this: but there are seasons, *I* hope, when all creatures, and the world which contains them, are scarcely perceptible, even through a microscope. May such seasons, my dear young friend, refresh and exhilarate you and me; and may every day bring such a season.

"You ask 'What success did Monday's request meet with?' If I understand your question, you refer to the manuscript sermons, which Mr. H. solicited. It was said concerning the placability of Archbishop Cranmer, 'Do my Lord of Canterbury but one shrewd turn, and he's your friend for ever.' I *wish* at least always to feel likewise. I had really thought that your good visitor might not have been *entirely* out of the path of duty if he had devoted last Sunday to the help of a weakly brother; and when I saw him on Monday, I took my revenge, for I treated him most cordially, lent him the manuscripts most cheerfully, and *volunteered* to preach for *him*, if I should have an opportunity, in passing through Leicester. But I could account for his lack of service. Last week was, if I mistake not, a week of fascination with many. Mr. H. was fascinated with Silverdale; the old women and perhaps some young ladies of Silverdale, were fascinated with Mr. H.; no wonder then, if in the midst of this general enchantment, poor St. Anne's and her minister were a little overlooked. But His Holiness the Pope never granted a fuller and a more *effectual* absolution than I do to all the parties, *whoever they are*, who are under the influence of the magic spell.

"Since last I wrote, Miss B—— has been extremely ill. On Tuesday I called in Dr. Campbell; he condescended to approve of all that I had done.\* Her complaint fluctuates; but I consider that she is recovering. Her mind is in a delightful frame."

\* Mr. Housman's medical knowledge was far from being contemptible, and proved of great service to him throughout life in visiting the sick.

Soon after his departure from Acrelands an unexpected gleam of brightness passed over the pecuniary prospects of the family at Greenfield. Mr. Housman was equally incapable of deriving solid happiness from money, and of receiving *any* advantage, whether spiritual or worldly, with an ungrateful or indifferent heart. His letters of this period, and in reference to this subject, are accordingly characterized by a more than ordinary degree of self-dedication to the author and giver of all good. 'The state of the heart toward God,' he observes to one of his correspondents, 'is the Barometer of all true enjoyment. \* \* It has been well said, 'Money *sometimes* does good; the expectation of it *never*.' If I know anything of myself, I can truly say, in the presence of the great Searcher of hearts, that I would much, oh very much rather, that I and mine should walk in the light of the Lord's countenance, though in great poverty, than have the largest treasures, with mere worldliness of spirit. Place anything, or everything, in the balance against eternal joy, and what does it weigh? Oh! press forward after the wondrous prize!' And in another letter he thus writes. 'My gradation of enjoyment, as it respects myself, is this. 1. *Communion with the Saviour*, by aiming to see something of his excellence, and to feel some suitable affections towards him. This is the grand, and should be the daily, or rather hourly, concern. If this be not attended to, all goes wrong. 2. *Domestic comfort*, within the circle of my own fireside. This with me is the second source of happiness. 3. *The society of friends*, whose hearts I know are both sincere and warm, and whose countenances beam with bene-

volence and kindness." How simple, and yet how majestic, are the pleasures of the righteous! The sweetest of all lives is surely the life that is religious. Often have I felt, in turning away from Greenfield, how appropriate to *that* dwelling was the sentiment of Cecil as he left the abode of Bernard Gilpin; 'There dwells as much happiness as can be known on earth.' Well might the Rev. Legh Richmond, after having visited Mr. Housman's family, remark, 'The grace of God indeed appears here.'

The commencement of the next letter alludes to the following passage in a previous note. Having accounted for the non-transmission of manuscripts, he says—"I recommend to my very kind friends a very frequent perusal of the Sermons of Peter and Paul, and of the Master of Peter and Paul. Don't murmur that you cannot, for a week or two, sip at a very scanty stream, when you can drink deeply at the Fountain."

"Sept. 5th, 1818.

"MY DEAR E.—I concluded, from your servant not having called last Saturday, either that his memory had failed, or that you had wisely preferred drinking at the 'Fountain,' rather than at a very shallow stream; or that your good father was again unwell, and your servant could not be spared. I called upon your brother to inquire concerning the latter supposition. It is a wise petition in the Moravian Liturgy, 'From all needless perplexities—deliver us.'

"I send you four sermons—one of them an old one; but we know who can apply it, and make it a blessing.

"I have been busy this week with my Pastoral

Visitor, and am a little shattered by the labour, and I have not the prospect of any help to-morrow. But I have so often found it true, 'When I am weak, then am I strong,' that it would be as foolish as it is wicked to doubt receiving seasonable and sufficient help.

"I long to have a certain large pew in the chapel again occupied. Is it, that I may have more souls to speak to, or that I may have many kind friends near me? It is difficult to come fairly and truly at one's motives. I wish, at least, that mine may be always upright and holy."

"I shall be glad," he writes, addressing the same friend a month later, "when you enter into your winter quarters. I don't like that large and sad vacuity which I see in the chapel on my left hand; but I *do* like the prospect of having near both my pulpit and my dwelling, that family whose unfeigned friendliness has suffered no fluctuation since I came to Lancaster, and which has always been one of my very valued compensations for the unpleasantness which has arisen from misconception and opposition." To this subject he frequently recurred. "I hope," he says in another note, "to see the whole family soon, in their accustomed place in the House of God. How long we may be permitted to assemble together, is known to him alone, who can subdue 'the unruly wills and affections of sinful men.' The times are solemn and portentous, and their voice is—'Every Christian to his closet'—and, 'Be ready.'" And in a note bearing date the 23rd of August, 1822, he again anticipates the pleasure of seeing at his side his beloved correspondent. "My sanguine disposition is again at

work: and I venture to picture to myself a very dear friend renewing her accustomed station, on her return to Lancaster, in the parlour and the pew. May the parlour witness renovated health, and sweet serenity of soul; and may the pew bear witness to something more than health—yea, to something more than serenity. May it witness ‘the witnessing of the Spirit’—the ‘joy unspeakable’—the prelibations of that high comfort which flows from ‘the Throne of God and the Lamb.’”

The following extract is from a letter addressed in 1819 to a brother-minister, whose Bishop had made some objection to his mode of administering the elements in the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.

“I had conversation with Bishop Majendie, when of this See, on the subject of administering the bread and wine to more than one, while the words were only once used. He conceded the point, when the number of communicants was large; though, if I mistake not, he recommended the use of the singular pronoun. But, I apprehend, the opinion of any former Bishop could not be pleaded.

\* \* I should really say, that when the number was large, and only *one* minister in attendance, the time which would be required, and the exhaustion which would ensue, if each were addressed separately, seem to render it necessary that the words, once used, should suffice for at least four or six. Upon this principle, I should intimate my opinion that more than one was included in the prayer at Confirmation, though the service may *seem* to imply that the prayer should be offered up for each.”

“GREENFIELD, August 21, 1819.

“MY DEAR E.—My attendance at Melling last

Saturday forenoon, on the funeral of Mrs. Parker, prevented me from sending the sermon which was preached on the preceding Sunday. I now send three; and if I could send an effectual blessing along with them, that blessing would certainly be sent. But it is God alone who giveth the increase. It is well it is so. If it were otherwise, broken cisterns would be idolized, and they would soon become conceited, as if they were perennial fountains. I love every view of Divine Truth which keeps sinners in their proper place of utter insignificance, and which exalts the Redeemer, as the only object of trust, and the only source of grace and peace. Heaven could not be heaven, if the creature had whereof to glory. It is encouragement enough to find it written—‘Ask, and it shall be given you.’ How easy to ask and to expect—in theory! How difficult to improve the promise—in experience and practice! But though difficult, it is attainable.”

*Heaven could not be heaven, if the creature had whereof to glory.* This sentiment was inwrought into his very being. “It is a delightful reflection,” he says elsewhere, “to all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, that over every door of the many mansions in their Father’s house above, there will be written, as it were in letters of unfading brightness, this inscription, ‘THE FREE GIFT.’ Oh then be thankful! It becometh you well. It is the temper of heaven; it is the work of heaven. Cherish that temper; abound in that work. ‘Think often,’ says the holy Baxter, ‘how great a mercy it is that thankfulness for mercy is made so great a part of duty.’”

One of the most efficient sources of gratitude,



humility, and praise, in connexion with the sublime topic of salvation by grace, appears to me to be presented in the fact of the necessary and eternal perpetuity of human guilt. Contradictory as the statement is of the *literal* testimony of the word of God, it is nevertheless indisputably true; *absolutely* there can be no freedom from the *guilt* of sin. Guilt, once incurred, remains for ever; even the spirits of the just made perfect are the spirits of the guilty. It is freedom from the *penalty* and the moral *results* of the guilt of sin that is meant by freedom from the guilt; and all scriptural expressions that seem to imply the latter, are to be regarded as elliptical, and as designed to convey the former sense. A sin once committed can never be uncommitted. Punishment may be cancelled, consequences may be diverted—and, through Jesus, consequences *are* diverted, and punishment *is* cancelled; but the sin itself is indelibly graven into eternity, and the guilt of the sin will be everlastingly present to the mind of God. It is beyond the power even of the blood of Christ to erase it. The effects of confounding the distinction between pardon and guiltlessness (and the error is far from being an uncommon one) are seen in mitigated impressions of the evil of sin, and in disparaging estimates of the undeserved *freeness* of salvation. The *immutability* of guilt should be urgently and unceasingly proclaimed.

“Friday, July 7, 1820.

“MY DEAR E.,—I send you the first fruits of my promise. Whether the intended weekly transmissions will afford a harvest worth the labour of reaping, I know not. Two things, however, I do

know :—that the grace of Christ can be made perfect in human weakness; and that the grace, if humbly and believingly sought both by writer and reader, will be found to be quite ‘sufficient.’—Then, he who soweth, and she who reapeth, will rejoice together in that day when joy will be something better than ‘the crackling of thorns under a pot.’

“I cannot send a Lecture, for I have preached none since your departure. On Tuesday I read the prayers in the chapel, and addressed the children for a considerable time. The words in Prov. iv. 1. “Hear, ye children, the instruction of a Father,” formed the basis of my address. I likewise catechised in the evening; and the two services furnished either prudence or idleness or some other principle which the deceitfulness of the heart has prevented me from discovering, with an apology for throwing the lecture on Mr. Gathorne.

“I thank you for your note of last Friday. It was kind to inform me concerning E. She is in wise and merciful, and therefore in safe hands. I have no doubt but I should blunder exceedingly if my wishes for her complete and robust health were fulfilled. Though the event, in all cases, is with him who doeth all things well to those who fear and love him, yet duty is ours; and *attention to means* is certainly a duty; and to those means which are connected with the apparent preservation or recovery of health, as well as those which are appointed, in the counsels of eternal mercy, to lead on to that kingdom where the inhabitant shall no more say, ‘I am sick.’ After this preamble, give my kind love to E., and tell her that I have a *threefold* and *daily* claim on her *dutiful attention* to

the few plain directions which I gave her :—namely, that I am her *physician*, though I fear a very shallow one ; that I am her *minister*, though I more than fear a very unworthy one ; and that I am her *friend*, and certainly a very sincere one. She cannot, and she will not, break through this mass of obligation to take care of her health. I hope, before the lapse of any very long time, to send her a note of inquiry and of counsel.

“Farewell, my very dear children: Grow in *grace* and in *the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*” The right management of the latter direction, leads, invariably leads, to the blessedness suggested by the former. In all reading, and meditation, and prayer, bend the main effort of the mind to the attainment of clearer and stronger discoveries of the Saviour’s glory, redemption, and love. Upon this, Christian experience, and holiness, and comfort essentially depend. How read we? ‘Till we all come, in the unity of the faith, and OF THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE SON OF GOD, unto a perfect man ; *unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*’ How vast the enjoyment, and how plain the way !

“I cannot at present fix the time for spending a few hours at Silverdale. I fear that it will not be within the present month. We have long been under an engagement to pay a visit to Mr. Gill at Windermere ; and thither, I believe, I must first bend my steps. But if nothing unforeseen should occur, the sweet seclusion, and the simple but beautiful scenery, and, above all, the many kind friends, of Silverdale, will not and cannot remain unvisited many weeks.”

"Tuesday Evening July 12, 1820.

"MY DEAR E.—R's return to Silverdale to-morrow presents me with an earlier opportunity than I otherwise might have had, of sending you last Sunday's sermon. To this sermon (not to its *execution*, but to its *subject*) I would call your very particular and daily attention. Before the ark of incomprehensible mercy—if the eye of faith be in any measure able to pierce through the covering—unbelief, and self, and sin, will always fall down! Ah! why are we ever so weak and so wicked as to clothe the Lord in the garments of vengeance, if we are sincerely desirous to find happiness in the light of his countenance? Why are we so *weak*?—for under such views, peace, and holiness, and comfort, are utterly unattainable. And why are we so *wicked*?—for we are robbing God of that lovely attribute in which he is said to delight; and we are robbing him of that ascription of glory and praise which should always be ascending from *our* lips and *our* souls. In all your thinking, and reading, and praying, endeavour, my dear child, to set the Lord before you, just as the Scriptures set him before you, as "the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious." View the stupendous love, as manifested in and through Jesus Christ; and there will be blessed times when humiliation, and confidence, and admiration, and gratitude, will have a conflict within you, *which* shall be the uppermost and strongest in your soul.

"We have had a *Visitation* indeed! Our poor Hymn Book trembles for its existence. I shall write to-morrow to the Bishop, to explain, and petition, and conciliate if I am able. The book, and

they who sincerely and feelingly use it, are in safe hands. If we are deprived of our accustomed comfort in this way, we must look for a double blessing on the other means of grace. No power but the power of the Eternal can keep Christ out of our hearts, if we unfeignedly desire the presence; and that power is the handmaid of eternal mercy to give Him the throne within.

"I hope to hear both from E. and you soon. Tell me, my dear E. what is the state of your health. Are you stationary, or better, or worse; if worse, in what respects?

"Mrs. Housman spoke to your class on Sunday afternoon, on the solemnity of that covenanting with the Lord which they were to engage in on the following day; and some of them were in tears. I consider our Sunday School as the nursery of the Church of Christ in this town; and you and my dear E. are among those whom the Lord of the Vineyard has selected and honoured to become the planters.

"I saw your Mr. B. at the Visitation. Poor man! The earthly tabernacle seems to be feeble and tottering; but the more feeble and the more tottering the better, if the immortal tenant within be fitted for a station in the Temple above. Ah, what a Temple! And what a 'light to lighten it!' And what a price did the Redeemer pay, that we might be admitted!

"If Mr. B. should come again to Lancaster, pray give him a note of introduction to me. Kind respects and kind love, according as each will be welcome, to the inhabitants of your peaceful and interesting cottage."

The Sunday School mentioned with such excusable partiality in this letter, was founded in the year 1812, and has continued ever since that time under the judicious and vigilant superintendence of Mr. Wane. "Conducted as it was," says Mr. Statter, "and indeed as in a great measure it is still, by those to whom Mr. Housman's ministry had been blessed, it has truly been a nursery of souls. Many have learnt in it those lessons of heavenly wisdom which have led them honourably and respectably through life, been their support in death, and their guide to a happy and rejoicing eternity."

In the following year, Mr. Housman again mentions the Sunday School of St. Anne's.

"A Sunday School, conducted as I believe St. Anne's to be, in simple dependence upon the care and blessing of Almighty God, and teaching, as that school most assuredly does, the pure principles of the Gospel of Christ, is indeed a wonderful institution. It unites, in its humble measure, the holy excellencies of the three grand Societies which are a glory and a mercy to this country and to the world. It is a Religious Tract Society; a Bible Society; and a Missionary Society. In this latter capacity, the influence of Sunday Schools is incalculable. It will be found, I feel persuaded, in that great day when all causes and consequences are unfolded, that thousands upon thousands who have given to their children a natural life, have received, through the instrumentality of those very children, who have gone forth from Sunday Schools as heralds of salvation, a spiritual life, even life eternal."

When he reaches the concluding pages of this

memoir, the reader will find how sweetly the idea of God's boundless mercy and ineffable love, so beautifully enforced near the commencement of the last letter, mingled with Mr. Housman's dying thoughts. This idea, which maintained throughout the whole of his ministerial life a prominent position in his mind, supplied, towards the close of his existence, the engrossing theme of his contemplation and his praise. Among the credenda of his *intellect* it held the same place and rank which it had ever held; among the credenda of his *heart* it became pre-eminent. Its spiritual impression was deepened by experience. His mere *opinions* underwent no change; the moral *effects* of those opinions, ripened by meditation, and matured by time, were changing from day to day. The nearer he approached the light of eternal realities, the more entirely he realized that exquisite and comforting scripture, "In him is no darkness at all." The glory of God in the face of Jesus, shone forth without a shadow to mar its brightness.

God is an infinite Being, possessed of infinite attributes; all are consequently of equal proportion and of equal power. His justice is as glorious as his mercy; nay it is upon the unmoveable foundations of eternal justice, that our hopes and expectations of eternal mercy must be built. To the danger of entertaining exaggerated and misdirected impressions of the *leniency* of the divine administration, Mr. Housman was sensitively alive; and against this danger, so popular and so pernicious, he has on many occasions lifted up a voice of strenuous expostulation. "'God is merciful,' (he says in one of his discourses) 'is the language of multi-

tudes who are on the brink of ruin. It is, in their lips, the language of ignorance, unbelief and presumption. It is the opiate which stupifies their consciences, whilst they are living in folly, worldliness, and sin. That God *is* merciful, far beyond the reach of all expression and of all thought, is an eternal truth: but it is equally true, that the Lord is known by the judgment he executeth.' Though merciful, he 'spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell.' Though merciful, he turned the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, 'making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly.' Though merciful, he has scattered Israel, his favoured and chosen people, and made them to be a proverb and a by-word among all nations;' and even their 'holy and beautiful house,' where his glory was manifested, and of which he had said, 'In this place will I give peace, is 'burnt up with fire.' Though merciful, he has ordained that the earth for the sin of man, shall be little more than one extended scene of disappointment, mourning, and death. Though merciful, he has assured us that the wicked 'shall go away into everlasting punishment:' yea, that 'all the people that forget God, shall be involved in the terrible ruin.'

And in a manuscript which lies before me, "Let us clear our minds," he says, "of the unfounded and mischievous notion that the Lord is a God *all* mercy. Ask the records of the Bible; ask a groaning world; ask the horrors of many a death-bed; ask—but you *cannot* ask—the millions who have died in sin. They would answer, with a voice louder than a thousand thunders, that the sugges-



tion cometh from the Father of lies; that it is one of his most ruinous devices; that it is one of his most powerful engines of destruction. Be not deceived. You have sinned, and sinned grievously, against the Lord your God; and if you have not received true repentance, and obtained forgiveness of your transgressions, the justice of that God is at this moment committed against your peace, and his wrath *abideth* on you. Oh! awake out of slumber! Arise—escape! Flee instantly, and flee fast.” But whither? To the God who has condemned? To the pure, and perfect, and inflexible Sovereign, whose government we have despised, whose authority we have insulted? Yes:—to this God, as he is manifested in Jesus Christ. God *out* of Christ is a jealous God, and a consuming fire; God *in* Christ is the Father of mercies, and the God of all consolations. God *out* of Christ is terrible in majesty, for he is shrouded in the disquieting sacredness of a broken and uncompromising law; God *in* Christ is tenderness and love, for he has magnified the law and made it honourable, he has scattered pardons like light, and has generously thrown open a way of access to the unutterable happiness of an endless existence. To look at God *out* of Christ, is to fear, and tremble, and die; to look at God *in* Christ, is to hope, and praise, and live. God *out* of Christ is eternally against us; God *in* Christ is eternally with us and for us—our refuge, our stronghold, our satisfying portion. God *in* Christ is to sinners precisely what God *out* of Christ is to intelligences that have never sinned. What can be grander, what more sustaining, what more encouraging and full of glory, than the

mighty and the blessed truth which that one word **IMMANUEL** enshrines? Well may we exclaim, taking up one of Mr. Housman's favourite ejaculations, "Oh! the mystery and the mercy of God in Christ!" "It will require the light of eternity," he has said, "and the enlarged powers of the soul in eternity, and the experience of a glorified eternity, even to lisp the praises of the grace of God." And in reference to the work of Jesus, these are his admiring words, "What an undertaking! Every movement from the Throne to the Cross, and from the Cross back again to the Throne, was a movement of grace—a movement of pure and marvellous mercy—of grace and mercy which will be felt and sung by adoring millions in the ages of eternity."

The following passage, on the subject of religious conversation, belongs to this period.

"I would give you a caution and a direction. Be constantly on your guard against mentioning divine things in a cold and formal way, or in an unfeeling and flippant manner. The former is unsuitable; the latter is disgusting. There is an awful sanctity in whatever relates to the great God, and to the momentous eternity before us, which should give to your conversation on such subjects a deep solemnity. It is said—I think of the great Judge Hale—that before he would mention the word 'God,' he made a pause: and the holy Leighton, you know, records, that the Jews forebore to tread upon the smallest piece of paper in their way, since *possibly* the sacred name might be upon it. We may learn much from these instances of perhaps *needless* scrupulosity.

"The *direction* I would give you is this. Let

the subjects of your Christian conversation be well chosen. And what are those subjects? Your first and leading subject cannot be mistaken. 'They shall sing in the ways of the Lord, that great is the glory of the Lord.' And what can *you* say of the Lord? You can say—that he is a God of bounty; a God of patience; a God of mercy; a redeeming God; a God of faithfulness: a God of love. What endless subjects for meditation and for conversation! Oh speak of him *often*, and his name will be to you as ointment poured forth."

The subjoined remarks, on the word of God, written in a kindred spirit, and nearly at the same time, are worthy of preservation.

"Casting away the fear of being accounted superstitious, cultivate the habit of *looking* at a Bible with respect and reverence. *Open* it with a kind of solemn pleasure; for God is there, in all his greatness, and holiness, and love. *Read* it with thankfulness—for it is a grant to you under the hand of God, and it is sealed to you by the blood of Christ; and the grant secures to you, if you be a humble believer, forgiveness, and sanctification, and victory, and heaven. It secures to you 'all things,' for 'you are Christ's and Christ is God's.' When good old Bishop Latimer was led to the stake, he took the Bible with him. He clung to it with holy affection. It had pointed out to him a Saviour; it had taught him how to live with comfort; it was now to teach him how to die in triumph. There is scarcely a page in the Bible which does not show more of God than all the wonders of Creation.

"It is difficult, and perhaps impossible, to deter-

mine which is the most interesting and important part of this most wonderful book. Every part becomes interesting and important when the mind is enlightened and the heart softened by the Spirit to perceive and to feel it. But still, some parts seem to have a weight and excellence peculiar to themselves. The history written by Moses, for instance, is a history of the Church of God in its infancy. The types and ceremonies under the law were shadows of good things to come. They pointed, as with a finger, and said "Behold the Lamb of God!" The Prophecies present before us grand views of the nature, the extent, and the glory, of the kingdom of our Immanuel. The Psalms are filled with the mournful and the joyful experience of a believer in Jesus. The Gospels detail the merciful life and the still more merciful death of our Redeemer. The Epistles abound with grand doctrines and with holy commands; with doctrines which seem to be always enforcing that large and noble duty, 'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' But that portion of the Scriptures which we call 'The Acts of the Apostles' seems to combine within itself more diversified instruction than is to be found in any other detached part of the Bible. It is a history of the rise and progress of the Church of Christ, after his ascension to glory. It affords many a painful proof of the desperate wickedness of the unrenewed heart; many a shining evidence of the mercy of the exalted Saviour; and many an instance of the glorious effects of receiving the grace of God in truth. Some of the most delightful passages in this most valuable history are those which

describe the intimate and affectionate communion that subsisted among the early disciples and followers of the Lord Jesus. To these I would particularly direct you. See how *they* loved each other; and pray to God, in the name of him who is *your* Master as well as theirs, that a like temper may be wrought in you."

For upwards of half a century Mr. Housman had been in the daily habit of selecting short portions of Scripture, generally single texts, for especial meditation; and having found the practice to be abundantly profitable to himself, he was accustomed to recommend it, with considerable emphasis, as a means of promoting holiness in others. Besides giving a full and ready acquaintance with the *letter* of Holy Writ (and this is a great thing) it conduces most importantly to a personal familiarity with the *spirit*. The heart and mind cannot, day after day and year after year, be inhaling the atmosphere of eternal truth, without yielding in some measure to the transforming influences of the blessed principle which pervades and animates it. The word of Christ is sure to dwell richly in *us*, if *we* dwell faithfully upon the word of Christ. "Be *often* in the Scriptures," Mr. Housman used to say, "and you will be *mighty* in them."

From a letter to another correspondent, written in the March of the same year, the following passage is taken.

"Sickness is a merciful dispensation if it lead to thoughts of that better country where sickness never comes. Be much in meditation on the happiness of the dead who die in the Lord. It is a fit

subject for the living. To see Jesus, THE INCARNATE LOVE OF GOD, face to face: to behold his pure and wondrous benevolence, in its varied forms and in its vast effects; and to be receiving from the ever-flowing fountain of goodness, all the fulness of joy—this is Heaven. And is not *such* a heaven worthy of a struggle? Oh! let us press forward; our labour will not be in vain. Think of the recompense of the reward. In *possession*—the peace of God which passeth all understanding; in *prospect*—the rest which remaineth; the glory to be revealed; the cup which runneth over. Dwell upon these remarkable ideas; compare them with the disturbed and unsatisfying enjoyments of the world which now is; pray that you may compare them honestly and fairly; and the blessedness they represent will be made manifest with power.”

The next extract, from a letter written in 1820, contains an important and needful direction.

“Let me caution you, in reviewing your past life, against falling into what I cannot but fear is a very common error. Do not speak of it as worse than you feel it to have been. You may be saying nothing more than the truth, *in relation to your life*; but you are going greatly and sadly beyond the truth, *in respect to your convictions*. This error will be avoided if you pray resolutely and perseveringly for the revealing light of the Holy Spirit. Pray to see sin *as it is*; and yourself as you *were* and *are*. Be constantly praying for the twin-graces of sincerity and humility.”

The progress and character of true belief are beautifully described in the following extract. I have met with precisely the same passage in one

of his manuscript sermons, to which it was probably transferred from the letter which supplies this quotation.

“Believing on the Son of God is always *preceded* by a feeling of necessity, by a conviction of sin, by a sense of guiltiness in the Lord’s sight, by an experience of depravity, and of a want of power to new-create the soul. It is *accompanied* by a persuasion of the sufficiency of the Redeemer’s work to procure mercy and grace, of his ability to save unto the uttermost, of his exceeding compassion and loving-kindness to all who seek him, and of his never-failing faithfulness to his promise that he will cast out none who come. And it is *crowned* by the prayer and application of the heart to Jesus, by a real resting upon the Rock of Ages, and by an actual committing of the immortal soul, with all its vast and everlasting interests, to the redemption, and mercy, and keeping of the blessed Jesus. ‘I know,’ says the Apostle, ‘whom I have believed, and that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.’ This is believing with the heart unto righteousness. This is receiving the Saviour’s atonement with a humble and thankful spirit; this is giving glory to God, for his salvation of love and grace.”

A letter to a brother-minister, dated July, 1820, supplies the annexed passage.

“I have seen, within a few days, a most astonishing triumph of grace. One of my good people had abundant evidence of the infidelity of her husband, in the grosser sense of infidelity. At the moment she was nearly overwhelmed. Her sleep departed, and her nerves were sadly unstrung. But she

knew where to apply. She has enjoyed religion for years, and has been a burning and a shining light. But the consolations which she has received from God within the last three days, seem so to leave behind all her former experience of his mercy, as if it had only been 'the hearing of the ear.' Her meekness towards her husband, and her concern for his soul, have been astonishing. They have won upon him; he has frankly acknowledged his *persevering* baseness, and he has begun to pray; and she is this day rejoicing in a trembling hope that they shall travel together in the narrow path. Her countenance indeed shines as if it were the face of an angel. Let us love, and sing, and wonder."

To another friend he says:

"Be much in prayer for the continued presence of God. 'If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence;' we can do nothing without it. The presence of God is the happiness of glorified spirits in heaven; the presence of God is the happiness of redeemed sinners on the earth. The presence of God is to the soul what the breath of life is to the body. Where God is not, there is death. Oh! how different, when the Lord lifts up the light of his countenance upon his servants! Poverty and pain are then annihilated. Innumerable instances exemplifying the truth of this remark, have come within my own experience. I will mention two. Five or six years ago I saw a person almost convulsed with seeming agony of the body; yet a few days afterwards she assured me that such had been the overpowering influence of her holy and triumphant joy in the Redeemer of her soul, that during



the struggle she had actually felt no pain whatever. This circumstance reminded me of what one of the martyrs said, while burning in the flames. 'You call for a miracle,' (he thus spoke to those around him) 'behold one. I feel no more, while perishing in this fire, than if I were lying on a bed of roses.' The promise was fulfilled—'As was his day, so was his strength.' \* \* The other instance illustrates the nothingness of *poverty*, when contrasted with the presence of the Lord Almighty. I had an aged Christian in the congregation to which I preached before I came to Lancaster. He was so poor that bread and water was the only food he could obtain. But great grace was upon him. He always attended in the House of God neat and clean. His enjoyment in public worship was frequently, I am persuaded, little less than rapture; and if *the goodness of God* was mentioned, the flame of devout thankfulness lighted up his fine countenance, and the tears of grateful joy trickled down his cheeks. He had the presence of God; and with his poor bread and water, he found that he had enough. He was rich in precious faith; he was rich in the *unsearchable* riches of Christ."

In the summer of 1820, Mr. Housman, accompanied by his youngest daughter and two affectionate members of the congregation of St. Anne's, paid a short visit to the Lakes. The following passage in a letter to the Rev. W. C. Wilson, written just before they set off on the excursion, and substantially repeated elsewhere, shows how entirely the subject of redeeming grace possessed her soul. "We propose," says he, "to leave Lancaster about next Friday, and to be at Winster on the Sunday. I don't

like journeying ; it has a tendency to divert the mind from the contemplation of the 'great sight'—'the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' I am well satisfied, from some little experience, that a glimpse of this Great Object can do what nothing else can do—namely, call into exercise at the same time, humiliation and confidence ; determination against sin and the world ; and determination for happiness, in the enjoyment of the knowledge and presence of the Lord." He was delighted with the journey. Cessation from labour recruited his health without disturbing, as he had feared, the serenity of his thoughts : and the exquisite scenery through which he had passed, furnished him with many happy and beautiful associations, and with abundant themes of gratitude and praise. Of all the lovely spots they visited, Grasmere interested him most deeply. The undisturbed and solemn quiet of that sweet valley, harmonized with the profound tranquillity of his own heart.

I need scarcely apprise the reader that Mr. Housman was a devout admirer of the works of Creation. Nature, no less than revelation, is the mind of God—and he felt it to be so. He saw God in all things, and Christ in God. The way in which, during a confidential walk, he would occasionally illustrate the objects about him by references to the language of sacred writ, and on the other hand, illustrate the language of Scripture by casual and graceful references to the mute but eloquent appearances of the earth and sky, is familiar to those who have rambled with him in the neighbourhood of his native town. I wish I could depend upon myself to record the particulars of his remarks one autumn evening

in the year 1836, as we walked together near the stone-quarries on the south of Greenfield. It was sunset; and the magnificent group of hills which confer so especial a charm upon the district of the English Lakes, lay bathed in the richest light and shade before us. Having stood for some time watching the exquisite scene, Mr. Housman turned suddenly round, and exclaimed—‘How affecting, in connexion with a view like this, is the noble expression of the Apostle to the Hebrews—‘upholding all things *by the word of his power!*’ What a demand it makes upon our gratitude and our trust!’—and then, by an easy transition, passing from the glory of Christ as the sustainer of the *visible universe* (for it was thus he understood the text) to his incomparably superior glory as the author and finisher of our inestimable faith, he proceeded, in his own peculiarly persuasive manner, to enlarge upon the stupendous work of redemption, and the endearing labours of the Redeemer. ‘In Creation,’ he said, ‘we see the *goodness* of God,—in Redemption his *grace*; in Creation we behold the *reality* of his loving-kindness—in redemption, its *degree*. Redemption, you know, has been called ‘Creation more sublime.’ And indeed, what are all the prospects in the world, when compared with the prospect of Mount Calvary and a dying Saviour? It is the sight of sights! The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ!’ ‘Yes,’ he added, after a short pause—‘in the face of the dying Jesus. *Here* is the mystery of the condescension and the love!’

“Looking unto Jesus,” as an atoning sacrifice for sin, may be said to have formed the employment of Mr. Housman’s life; to have constituted

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the pleasant and profitable business of his existence. To the 'sight of sights' his eyes were perpetually turned; and as men's characters are influenced by their habitual impressions or prevalent objects of thought and feeling, the glory and the grace of this object, so full of loveliness, so full of wonder, operated, in a more than ordinary measure, upon him. It did great things for him; it did unspeakably great things for him; it told upon his being like a magnet. Never perhaps were the practical results of the doctrine of the Atonement more unquestionably or more attractively evidenced. His purest, and sweetest acts of adoration sprang from the predominant sense of the immensity of the good-will of God, as exhibited in the work of the crucified Saviour. The Cross of Christ, ever radiant with the light of the divine attributes, harmoniously concentrated into the expression of this sublime and penetrating truth—and possessed, as it were, of all the positiveness and reality of a palpable substance—was constantly before him. No darkness, however thick, obscured for a moment that precious symbol of the divine kindness; no glare of external fascinations, however splendid, could outshine it. Like the guiding and cheering pillar of the Israelites, it was with him by night and by day. His affections, thus brought into continual contact with the impressive moral power of the transaction of Calvary, were continually exercised in a way of love; and love is at once the source and the end, the root and the flower, the only right principle and the only right development, of Christian virtue and spiritual excellence. The death of Christ, viewed as the grandest manifestation of the gracious and

forgiving and inexhaustible tenderness of the Father, as the ground of all the invitations addressed to sinners, and all the promises made to believers, having won its way to his heart, and having secured the heart thus reached, in the bonds of an affectionate and abiding gratitude, spoke peace to every accusation of conscience, gave firmness and victory in every temptation, and stimulated the conduct by means of purified desires and purifying hopes, to a course of consistent and beautiful holiness. It made him holy by first making him happy; and this is the established method of its working. It supplied wisdom and righteousness and sanctification, as well as pardon; the invigorating elements of godly action, as well as the foundation of confidence and comfort; deliverance from the supremacy of sin, as well as exemption from its curse. The priestly office of Christ, which compassed a restoration of the *image* of God no less than a restoration to his *favour*, had its whole *effect* upon his nature. No marvel then that the Cross should have been the subject of his contemplation and chiefest rejoicing; the theme on which he most delighted to dwell and to expatiate. How could he do otherwise than magnify the mysterious decease which it represents and commemorates? That decease—on the one hand ratifying and substantiating the *prophetical* office of the divine sufferer, and, on the other, admitting him to the full inheritance of his *kingly* authority—was felt to be the very key-stone which knits together the stupendous past and future of Redemption; was felt to be, in relation to the spiritual system of which the oracles of God are the record, precisely what the common

centre round which the several systems of the universe revolve, is, in respect of the material creation—the inmost abode of the vast law of gravitation, by the agency of which the order of all subservient parts, and of the whole is perpetually and immutably sustained.

The following passages are extracted from unpublished manuscripts. They forcibly indicate, in confirmation of what has been said, both in the last paragraph and in previous pages of this memoir, that Mr. Housman, in dwelling upon the mediatory or foundation-principles of the Christian dispensation, was far from falling into the error of neglecting those which are ultimate or superstructural. They show, on the contrary, how completely, to his mind, the one *implied* and comprehended the other; how inseparably reconciliation through the *death* of Jesus, connected itself with sanctification through the glorified *life* of Jesus.

The first of them is taken from a sacramental discourse, preached at St. Anne's, in the year 1826.

“The time when the cup of blessing was appointed, and the momentous circumstances which attended it, should be had in everlasting remembrance. It was given on the night of the Saviour's betrayal. He had said, in the full view of the shame of the Cross, ‘Father, the hour is come’—and the hour was pressing hard upon him. And what an hour!—and what a bearing it had upon the immortal interests of man! It was an hour, marked by circumstances of a very opposite kind. It was an hour of *darkness*. Over all the land there was an awful gloom; and the black purposes of the powers of hell might seem to be accomplished.

It was an hour of *sorrow*. The holy humanity of Jesus was enduring the agony of the Cross, and the hearts of his faithful few were pierced with misery. It was an hour of *death*, and of a death most strange; for the Lord of Glory bowed his head in weakness, and the Prince of Life gave up the ghost. It was likewise an hour of *triumph*. The contest between the Son of God and the great Enemy of God was now determined. The Serpent's head was bruised. He fell, like lightning from heaven; and provision was made for the deliverance of all his captives, who, to the end of the world, should receive the great salvation. And it was an hour of *life*. The Spirit of life was then purchased by the Saviour's obedience unto death, to quicken the dead in sin, to visit and to bless believers with the life of God in the soul, and to bestow upon them the precious gift of happiness eternal. It was an hour in which shadows were turned into substance, and the mysterious intimations of the past were realized and made manifest. Surely an hour like this—full of a subject planned from everlasting, the wonder of angels, the joy and the song of the approaching eternity—should fix our thoughts, and fix our hearts, and give a bias to every movement of our being! Oh that our meditations were always crowding around the Cross of Calvary!"

The next—scarcely, if at all, less beautiful—is even more explicit.

"The great subject of the Gospel, is Jesus; Jesus, the eternal Son, found in fashion as a man; Jesus, made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law; Jesus, travelling in the

might of his love and mercy, until he could proclaim the weightiest truth that ever was published in our guilty world 'It is finished;' Jesus, who rose from the dead as a conqueror over death; Jesus, who ascended on high, leading captivity captive, and receiving gifts for men, yea for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them. Of this Jesus it is written, 'Every one who seeth the Son, and believeth on him, shall have everlasting life.' Oh! be constantly looking unto him. Be habitually contemplating *who* he is, and *what* he is, and what he *has* done, and what he is *willing* to do, and what he *is* doing, for all who seek him. Be habitually contemplating his character of majesty, and holiness, and mercy, and faithfulness. It is one sure effect of the grace of God which bringeth salvation, that it excites in the hearts of all who receive it, one general desire—and that desire is "'We would see Jesus.' We would behold his glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." They would behold him, not only as a Saviour, but as *their* Saviour; as the Passover to preserve *them* from the destroying Angel; as *their* Refuge from the Avenger of blood; as their Shepherd to feed and to restore them; as their High Priest to make intercession for them, and to purify and present before the throne their duties, their worship, their souls; and as their Lord, to rule *over* them by his commandments, *in* them by his grace, and *for* them by his own right hand—giving them the victory over the world, and sin, and Satan, and death, and the grave."

As it is by the work of the Cross that these in-



estimable blessings are secured, the work of the Cross was made to occupy, in all Mr. Housman's ministrations, a place of central and prominent importance. It was the Alpha and the Omega, not of his preaching only, but of his life and conversation. Hear him. "Compared with this subject," he says, "all the interests of all the kingdoms of the earth—nay, the wonderful works of God's vast creation, and the care and goodness of his ever watchful providence—shrink and appear little. In the death of Immanuel there is indeed not only a deep solemnity, but an everlasting greatness of importance and consequence, in which both earth and heaven, in which both man and God, are concerned." To use the words of Archbishop Leighton, he counted "the whole world, in comparison with the Cross of Christ, one grand impertinence."

To an affectionate friend he thus writes in 1821.

"Christ crucified is the very soul of meditation. *Think* of the Cross of Christ; *talk* of the Cross; *glory* in the Cross:"—and the counsel was illustrated in his own example. "Carry with you," he says to another friend, "wherever you go, the idea of Christ crucified. Let it be your bosom-thought, and it will be your guard from bosom-sin. The world, in its thousand forms and disguises, will ask your attention and your heart. But the world crucified your Lord. Look to the crucifier and to the crucified; and then love and cleave to the world, if you can." "If the Cross," he says in 1824, "fails to win the heart unto God, the heart is never won. Terrors are in vain. The hearing of the songs of glory, or the blaspheming of the lost, would be equally in vain."

The immutability of the grace of Christ, the unchangeableness of the rich and glorious mercy of the Redeemer, was a subject upon which, in alliance with that of the unconditional freeness of the offers of the Gospel, he took especial delight in dwelling. These two topics are beautifully enforced in an undated manuscript which lies before me.

“Behold the generous and unqualified invitations of the Saviour. ‘In the last day, the great day of the Feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying—‘If *any* man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.’ And again—‘Come unto me, *all* ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’ In these invitations the arms of his redeeming mercy were wide extended—and the guilty, the miserable, and the helpless, were welcome to flee thither; the guilty, to receive the pardon of their God; the miserable, to be made happy in sanctified affections and in the love of Christ; and the helpless, to be strengthened by the Lord of all power and might. In his invitations Jesus Christ is still the same. He is perpetually uttering the same language of tenderness and grace. Do not object that you have been great sinners, and sinners of a long standing in the service of Satan;—the word ‘all’ includes *you*. *Every one* who asketh, receiveth; *every one* who seeketh, findeth; to *every one* who knocketh, it shall be opened. These are universal encouragements, and they extend to *you*. Do not object that you possess no *qualifications* to approach, no goodness of your own to *recommend* you to the Son of God :

‘All the goodness he requireth,  
Is to see your *need* of him.’

*Do you see that need? Do you feel that need?* Come and welcome. Give him credit for a generous heart. He cannot, indeed he cannot, resist the importunity of a penitent. Give him credit for a *tender* heart. Approach him in confidence. He will receive you; his atoning blood will cleanse you; his renewing spirit will seal you the children of God. Whilst on earth he cast out none that came to him; and he will not now begin. He is still the same; the same in his invitations, the same in his promises, the same in his ability and willingness to save. Are you writing bitter things against yourselves? Looking backward, and looking within, are you ready to cry out, under a sense of multiplied transgressions, 'Wo is me—I am undone!' You are *not* undone. Call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. He has saved millions, and he will save you. Remember his charge to the assembled apostles—'that remission of sin should be preached in his name among all nations, *beginning at Jerusalem.*' Jerusalem was the city of murderers. Oh! take comfort and boldness from this amazing miracle of grace. Beware how you do despite to the spirit of mercy. It is of glorious largeness. A ransom quite sufficient for all, however defiled, has been paid down. What iniquity so heinous, which the Cross cannot outstretch and outweigh? What stain of sin so deep which the blood of Immanuel cannot fetch out? What injury can have been done to the divine honour and government, which is not fully and eternally repaired by the awful sufferings and fearful death of the Son of God? Ye who are shaking with alarm lest hell from be-

neath should be moved to meet you at your coming, and the wrath of God should fall upon you to the uttermost—look to the Cross, and consider who is bleeding and is dying there, and for whom the fountain of his blood was opened. He who bled was the brightness of his Father's glory; and the all-cleansing and perennial fountain was opened for every one who flees thither in desire, and hope, and reliance, that *he* may be cleansed and purified. If these dispositions be yours—let not your hands hang down, nor your knees be feeble. The death of Jesus and the promises of the word, and the oath of Jehovah, unite in telling you that grace is reigning through righteousness even unto *your* eternal life. When, therefore, Satan would persuade you that there is no hope, point him to the Cross, and tell him that he was a liar from the beginning.—Point him to the Cross, and tell him that the everlasting purpose, and mercy, and power, and faithfulness, of the great God, have drawn a circle of protection around all the millions which have sought refuge there, and that *through* that circle neither the subtilty nor the force of all the hosts of hell can ever break. Yes, my brethren!—if all in this congregation were within that sacred circle, looking simply and believingly to the Lamb of God, we should soon form a part of that larger and more glorious circle of ransomed immortals, who will surround the throne of God for ever.”

The *suitableness* of the Saviour in his mediatorial offices was a favourite topic with Mr. Housman. I take the following passage from one of his manuscripts.

“Christ, the Mediator between God and man, is

an all-sufficient and a suitable Mediator. As the eternal Son, he is one with the Father; and, as possessing the human nature, he is one with us. As man, his love and compassion are perfect; as God manifest in the flesh, his mercy and power are infinite. He is just such a Mediator as our necessities require; just such a Mediator as our hearts could wish. Ye who are fearful, trembling, and almost despairing, consider this subject. Your sinfulness, you say, is great, exceeding great; and you say truly. *But there is a great Mediator.*—He is the Son of God, and the Son of man. You strive against sin, but you seem tied and bound with its chain. *There is a great Mediator.* He created the worlds, and he can new-create your soul. Temptations subdue you; you have no strength for resistance. *There is a great Mediator.* His arm can give you firmness, wisdom, victory. There are before you, sickness, and death, and the grave. You shrink—you tremble. *There is a great Mediator.* He can make the chamber of disease a chamber of joy; he can make the dark valley, through his glorious presence, a pleasant and a shining place; he can show you the opening grave to be nothing more terrible than a short passage to your Father's house above, and to all the blessings and the glories it contains. Such is the Mediator. Such is Jesus! His power is infinite, his mercy is everlasting; he can subdue all things unto himself, and he is willing to do so. You do not dispute his power; but you question his willingness to receive *you*. The only question is this—whether *you* be willing to receive *him*. If you possess the willingness, the point is clear. He is pledged to cast out none who come to him.”

Consistently with these views of the person, character, and work of the Redeemer, he regarded timidity in the profession of Christian principles with a pity little short of contempt. "What a meeting, there will be at the last day," he has said, "between the Saviour and those professors who would not endure a hard name in return for a life and death of love, for invitations full of grace and truth, and for offers of an immortality of glory!" The sermons which he preached for some years after his coming to Lancaster, abound in urgent and often very beautiful appeals to the hearts and consciences of Nicodemite believers. I select one.

"Ashamed of Jesus! It surely cannot be.—What!—ashamed of him whom all the angels of God worship, and with whose praises all heaven will resound eternally! Ashamed of him who endured the cross, despising the shame, that *you* might be reconciled to God, and be raised to the high dignity of being the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty! What! ashamed of Him who must comfort your hearts, if they *are* comforted, as you pass through life; who must support you, if you *are* supported, in the valley of the shadow of death; who must be your friend, if you *have* a friend in the Day of Judgment; who must crown you, if you *are* crowned, with glory, and honour, and immortality! What!—ashamed of such a Saviour!—of a Redeemer, whose majesty reared the heavens, and whose mercy is raising a spiritual temple of ransomed millions, every stone of which will be polished by his own hand, and the whole of which is to become the joyful habitation of the King Eternal! Ashamed of such an one! It must not—it will not—it cannot be. No. Go forth rather and

tell the world, that while *they* are glorying in their shame, *you* will never be ashamed of your glory ; that you serve a Master whom you reverence ; that you are following a Shepherd who gathered you with his arm when you were wandering astray ; that you will magnify a Friend, who has cemented your affections by his own heart's blood ; that you will cleave to him in life ; that with your feeble voice you will whisper, even in death, that he is worthy ; and that you hope—the dark waters being passed—to employ your immortal powers to his everlasting honour.”

The reader who has attended carefully to these and similar extracts, does not require to be told that Mr. Housman's ministrations were happily exempt from that most subtle of all the subtle modifications of self-dependence, the resting upon the *act* of faith instead of the *object* of faith. Not less free were they from the equally dangerous fallacy of resting upon both jointly. To attach any importance to faith, beyond that which belongs to it as the *instrument* by which we are brought into communication with the invisible things of the eternal world, whether in the way of belief, application, reliance, or attachment, is, in fact, paradoxical as it may seem, to be totally *without* faith : and he who does so, is moving unprogressively and blindly within the dark and narrow circle of the covenant of works. To annex *merit* to faith, is no better than annexing merit to alms-giving ; the only difference between the two being, that the one is an operation of the mind, and the other an act of the body. Nor will the force of this observation be diminished, by stating faith to be the gift of God ;

unless it can be shown that the bestowment was designed as an end and not as a means. "Faith," says a distinguished writer, "no more *itself* justifies a man, than the abstract act of swallowing *itself* nourishes a man. What justifies, is the perfect righteousness of Christ appropriated, not the faith which appropriates; what nourishes, is not the abstract act of swallowing, but the food which is swallowed by the act."\*

We resume the correspondence. The interesting communication which follows, was addressed to one of the beloved young friends to whom so many of the letters already printed were written.

"Thursday, July 20, 1820.

"MY DEAR E.—The cautious conclusion in your last note (*'at present,'* marked by an emphatic dash—*'I am your affectionate friend,'* &c.) may be supposed to leave me in doubt whether I am *now* writing to a warm friend, or to a cold friend, or to no friend at all; or to one, who, having been a friend, may be turned into an enemy. But charity, aided *in this case* by a little vanity or self-love, hopeth that what may wear the appearance of approaching alienation, is nothing but the stern exercise of high principles. It is intended to convey *reproof* to me, for having used in my note an expression like the following—"ever yours." But I really cannot retract it, nor plead guilty. All regard which deserves the name, is founded on mutual hopes in one common salvation, and on a mutual expectation of being admitted, as parts of the vast family of the redeemed, to sing together the riches of a Saviour's mercy, when every note will

\* Faber on Justification, 2nd edition, p. 296.



be love. Now, if the hopes and the expectations be sound and scriptural, and if the promises will all be fulfilled, where is the objection to saying, 'Ever yours, affectionately?' It will be so, whether it be said or not.

"But perhaps your conscience was operating with more, if possible, than its usual fearfulness of using a single word of undue strength or latitude. I venerate conscience. I do not like a bold, thoughtless, galloping conscience, which can heedlessly throw down every barrier, or leap over a five-barred gate, or break through what is only *suspected* to be the divine will. Such a conscience never wears well in the point of comfort; and never turns out well as a preservative against sin and sorrow. It is, however, a desideratum in theology, to have a treatise written, in which the difference could be accurately and scripturally defined, between a *superstitious*, a *scrupulous*, and a *tender* conscience.

"But whether, my dear child, your cautious language was the result of high principle, or of great tenderness of conscience, or of approaching alienation of mind from your minister and friend, I know not—nor perhaps do *you* exactly know. Our motives often lie hidden from our own penetration, amidst the rubbish of a deceitful heart. May I, however, be permitted to remind you, that you are under *one* obligation to your minister, and that of *perpetual* force, and from which you cannot be released while you continue one of his people. 1 Thess. v. 13, former part.

"I hope, if the Lord will, to take a peep at Silverdale for a few hours, within a fortnight or three weeks from this time. I trust that I shall not find

you shivering under the cold fit of your *aguish* regard. Get it over before I come. If, however, you should feel or fear its influence, I beg that you will summon up into your service all the aids which courtesy and benevolence can supply; that if I cannot see on my dear E——'s countenance a smile of *complacency*, I may at least discover a smile of *good-will*.

"Farewell. Let it be your *daily* aim, and I hope it will be mine, to say, with the spirit and with the understanding, to a redeeming God, 'Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of Thee.' This state of the heart, I know from some little experience, is happiness; and when it is attained—but alas! how feebly in degree—how does it throw into the shade the brightest glare of all sublunary things! How does it reduce in importance the smiles and the frowns of the world—and even the kindnesses, uncertainties, yea, and the *vacillations*, of Christian affection! The infinity of the object contemplated, and of the blessings coveted, makes the temporal concerns of a universe shrink within very narrow dimensions.

"My imagination is seldom either correct or lively, but I think I can set before me the family at Silverdale, and picture to myself some of your occupations. In the front of the group is my long-tried and faithful friend, your excellent father. I see him enjoying (and I really delight in the image before me) health, and his family, and his farm, and his Bible. I know that you make much both of him and of your good mother. You cannot make too much. We can have our parents only

once; and their affection is at once tender, and disinterested, and self-denying, and *persevering*.

"My paper compels me to conclude. Kind love to E—r.; but perhaps I may send her a few lines, to thank her for the gratification which her note afforded. May *all* the blessings of the New Covenant be the portion of you and yours."

This beautiful letter appears to have given his correspondent pain—such is the sensitiveness of genuine friendship. Mr. Housman instantly despatched the following communication.

"Friday Evening.

"MY DEAR E.—I have this moment received your note. I should be *very, very* sorry, to do or say anything which would give you a moment's pain. Though I preached, in my last note, from the text which *you* had, as it were, forced upon me, yet I felt much more than half persuaded, that any apparent want of friendliness on your part, consisted chiefly in a *casual expression* of approaching distance and coldness, and did not arise from an *habitual disposition of the heart*. It would indeed be most foolish in me, and perhaps would approach to the nature of sin, if I suffered a mere word to invalidate all those evidences of Christian confidence and kindness, which the undeviating testimony of years has been giving and confirming. Oh no. My cordial esteem and affection for my dear E., whom I consider a child, a friend, one of the lambs of the Lord's flock, and my 'joy and crown of rejoicing,' are too sincere and strong to be thus shaken. Dismiss the subject from your mind, and forgive me if any expression of mine caused you the slightest grief.

"I thank you for your inquiries after my health. I was not well the former part of the week; but, through mercy, am now nearly as usual.

"In my note last week to E—r., (which was written after my note to you) I mentioned the probability of my seeing Silverdale the ensuing week. The probability seems now to be much weakened: and I am sorry that it is so. If all be well, Mr. and Mrs. G. B., myself, and Agnes, will most likely set off for Windermere on Friday next. I am not fond of a journey. A variety of scenery has a tendency to take off the mind's eye from the 'great sight' of the 'glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.' This, this is the object which can elevate, and calm, and spiritualize the soul. To this object, my dear child, let your contemplation, through the Spirit's light and power, be daily directed."

"Greenfield, August 12, 1820.

"MY DEAR E—R.—I am happy to have been enabled to borrow Theron and Aspasio for Richard. I am indeed glad that his mind is receiving a direction towards serious reading.

"I have sent him, accompanied by a note, *The Pilgrim's Progress*. It often interests young minds, and becomes the means of leading them forward to thought, and prayer, and heaven.

"Through much mercy we reached home in safety. If he who preserveth both man and beast had not been our protector, the concluding history of our journey would have been this, 'their carcasses fell' among the Lakes.

"The occupations of Saturday leave me no time for enlarging. But I rejoice in every opportunity which gives me the renewed privilege of saying that

I am, my very dear child, your most affectionate friend and minister."

The note alluded to was as follows:—

"Greenfield, August 12, 1820.

"MY DEAR RICHARD.—I request your favourable acceptance of a small book, which, however, contains large instruction. Under a very striking allegory it points out a Christian's path through a world of dangers to a world of glory.

"I rejoice at your desire to read Hervey's *Theron and Aspasio*. It is, I trust, an indication that you wish to bend your mind, in the days of your youth, to the *care of your soul*. This, my young friend, is the one thing needful. The fashion of this world is passing away; and they are truly miserable whose life and whose hope must perish together.

"My parting advice is this. Read books of a serious tendency. Above all, read your Bible daily; with prayer for the Holy Spirit to open your understanding, and to fix your heart upon the Redeemer."

"September 1, 1820.

"MY DEAR E—r.—I thing you mentioned that Richard was expected at Silverdale. I send him a note. I should like to maintain occasionally a brief communication with him. To know that he is remembered with kindness, and inquired after with real solicitude and regard, may, among means of far greater moment, have some little influence in forming his character. I do like him, and when this is the case, it is a difficulty with me not to show it. I could almost as soon cease to breathe.

"I was mercifully brought home the other evening in safety, though not without considerable weariness; but I would any time encounter similar weariness for similar comfort. To converse with

he thus proceeds;—"The subject before us may remind you, Christian believers, of a high approaching enjoyment. You are to meet your fellow-Christians around the Throne—and what a meeting will that be! What a meeting!—when all darkness, and sin, and imperfection, are no more; and when every holy affection is perfect, and is fervently glowing in the soul! What a meeting!—when the gracious Shepherd of Israel is dwelling among you, and feeding you with loving-kindness and tender mercies! What a meeting!—when you are talking with your fellow-pilgrims of your mutual difficulties, and your mutual deliverances; of the Lord's wisdom and mercy, which led you step by step, and guarded you on every side;—when you are talking of the wonders of that grace which planned your redemption—of the preciousness of that blood which accomplished it—and of the triumphs of that love which subdued your carnal unwillingness, and laid you, as humbled criminals, at the foot of the Cross;—when you are talking of the power and the faithfulness which would not suffer you to destroy yourselves, but which conquered, in you and for you, the world, the flesh, and the devil, and death, and the grave, and which brought you in safety, and pure as the angels of light, to dwell with the Lord God in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. Oh! what a meeting!—what a conversation!—what an enjoyment!—and the whole giving glory to God and the Lamb!"

The following extract from a discourse preached in the year 1831, is eminently beautiful.

"There is a world to come, where all who love

Christ will certainly be assembled. It is a world of *purity*, where nothing that defileth can ever enter. It is a world of *rest*, where afflicting providences will afflict no more; where disappointed expectations will disappoint no longer: where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary enjoy an eternity of repose. It is a world of *light*. There, mysterious dispensations lose their mystery, for the judgments of God are all made manifest. There, what appeared lowering in this world, will be seen clothed in brightness; and what was felt as overwhelming, will be discovered as the appointment of the richest mercy. It is a world of love and glory; perfect love, and perfect glory! Oh! think of this! God in Christ Jesus dwells among the family of Heaven. They see him as he is, and are like him. He leads them to the fountain of living waters, and they adore him. Adoration is an *instinct* there. They are united to him, not only in the bonds of the everlasting covenant, but in the lovely bonds of an everlasting affection, and their affection is *diffused*. Think of *this*! Perfect love, infinitely diffused! It ascends, first to him who sitteth upon the Throne, and then, for *his* sake, to the countless millions who are casting their crowns before him, who are bearing his image, and who are singing that he is 'worthy.' 'Absent from the body, present with the Lord!' This is enough: this is Heaven. This is our exceeding great reward. Let us press forward; the earthly tabernacle will soon fall. Let us press forward; and soon—it may be before another sun has risen—we shall behold a countenance brighter than a thousand suns."

These are elevated views of Heaven. And what *less* than such a heaven, a heaven of unimaginable spiritual felicity, could meet the wants and satisfy the wishes of our moral being?—even now, in its condition of imperfect development, yearning with unequal but insatiable eagerness for the manifestation of an ampler, a perfected spirituality. Oh! such a heaven is *indeed* worthy of the *whole* exertion of *all* the powers of the soul! It is no mere place of *refuge*, vulgarly set up by the vicious fears of the wicked, and occupied with the wearisome engagements of a monotonous eternity; it is a state of consummated and yet of ever fresh delight, all springing from the perception of the adorable character and moral beauty of the Redeemer. It is the God of Paradise, revealed in the person of his exalted Son, that gives Paradise its glory and its charms. It is the holiness of Paradise that makes its happiness. “‘Absent from the body, present with the Lord,’ is the scripture account of heaven.” “‘We shall see him as he is’ will be heaven.” “Heaven is a place of enjoyment, *because the glory of the Lord is there manifested in full brightness.*” “‘Present with the Lord’ is a compendious expression of the just made perfect; in that presence is ‘fulness of joy.’” Such were his impressions of the inheritance of the saints. “There is no *trouble* there;” he says: “sorrow and sighing have fled away. God himself hath wiped away all tears from off all faces. There is no *temptation* there. Between Satan and the redeemed in their rest, there is a great gulf fixed; and the enemy, with all his power, can never pass it. There is no night there. ‘The Lord God giveth them light, and THE LAMB



is the light thereof.' *Perfect knowledge* is there; the knowledge of the glorious character of the Lord our God. 'We shall see him as he is;' even so saith the Spirit. *Completed holiness* is there. The understanding will be without a cloud; the heart without one irregular desire; and every power and passion of the soul will be fixed upon the source of all purity and bliss. 'We shall be like him,' the lip of eternal truth has pronounced. The vast blessedness of *adoring gratitude* will be there. The song has begun, but it will never cease--'Salvation unto our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.' And upon this exceeding weight of glory, it is the will of the Most High that there shall be stamped 'ETERNITY.'"

Heavenly-mindedness (which has been defined to be spirituality exercised in reference to one specific object, the celestial state) distinguished Mr. Housman in an uncommon degree. The employments and the joys of the redeemed in bliss, supplied the topics of frequent meditation, and, in the latter part of his life, of frequent discourse. His thoughts turned *instinctively*, as it were to the "happy home" of the righteous; and he would speak of it as one might be expected to speak who felt that a mansion of imperishable materials was prepared for *him*. It was beautiful to observe how *experimentally* he talked about the things which are invisible and eternal; how thoroughly, having experienced the blessedness of *living* to Christ, he appreciated the blessedness of the dead who *die* in the Lord. He knew what Canaan was, for he had eaten of the ripe clusters of Eschol. He knew what the glories of the New Jerusalem were; for

he had inhabited "the anticipatory paradise of Christian piety." He may be said to have dwelt on the borders of the river of God, and in sight of the City made glad by its sacred streams. The brilliant images of the Apocalypse—the walls of jasper, the gates of pearl, the streets of pure gold, the golden crowns, the fountains of water springing up everlastingly, the harpers harping on their harps, the white-robed multitudes, THE THRONE, with the slain but living Lamb in the midst, and the ethereal Light which lightens the majestic Temple of the King of Saints, and gives it all its incomparable excellence—were something better to him than so many splendid but unmeaning fictions. They were the genuine symbols of positive, influential, *near* realities. Substantiated by faith into spiritual facts, they had the distinctness of familiar objects, and mingled, like household ideas, among the habitual associations of his being.

To the young friend in whose welfare so lively an interest is expressed in a foregoing page, the following affectionate letter was addressed, on the occasion of his entering upon one of the most arduous and honourable of professions.

"September 2, 1820.

"MY DEAR RICHARD.—I probably may take the liberty of sending you a short note, as opportunity offers, or as a subject presents itself. You have a threefold claim upon my best wishes and exertions. You are one of that family for whose comfort I feel a very peculiar interest; you were lately, occasionally at least, one of my congregation; and I have conceived a real regard for you. You will not therefore wonder that I address you and consider you as my young friend.

"You must not expect, my dear Richard, that everything in your new situation will be equal, in point of comfort, to the many indulgences in your father's house. It may not be pleasant to ascend an inconvenient ladder; but if, at the top of the ladder, we should behold a beautiful estate, which, as a recompense of our climbing, we might call our own, we should probably set about the climbing, and should press up the ladder with patience. Such a ladder is an Apprenticeship. Some of the steps may be rather high and troublesome; but if they lead to eminence in a profession they should not be regarded. Think, my dear Richard, what is at the top of the ladder, and never mind the inconvenience of the way.

"If there be one or two young men besides yourself in the shop, you will probably observe much giddiness; and perhaps you may hear religion ridiculed, and serious characters reviled. Here will be much danger; and against this danger you must be guarded, and can alone be guarded by an habitual sense of the momentous importance of real religion, both as it respects present peace and an everlasting existence. You must, my dear friend, be frequently on your knees, to implore the grace of Christ that you may *feel* the 'importance of a soul immortal;' that you may constantly be choosing the good part which cannot be taken from you; that you may be abidingly impressed with a conviction of the *necessity* of the Redeemer's mercy, of the *all-sufficiency* of the Redeemer's power to help you, of the infinite *excellence* of the Redeemer's character, and his worthiness to be loved and honoured; and of the *unspeakable blessedness* of enjoy-

ing the Redeemer's presence and salvation for ever. Under these views and feelings, you will no more mind a laugh from the vain and the worldly, than a traveller would regard a slight drizzling shower, when his home, and the comforts of his home, were full in view. He would rather be without the shower; but it is nothingness itself, when compared with the delights he has in prospect. The Saviour himself went through the world in the paths of reproach and sorrow. His religion is still the same. The heart of man, while unchanged, is still the same; and all who truly follow Jesus must share in the reproach.

"My paper tells me that I must conclude. I must therefore condense what I would say. Be first a Christian indeed, and then a Surgeon. Aim to be high in the school of Christ, and high in your profession. Diligence, sanctified by the grace of God, will do both things for you. Hallow the Sabbath; be firm in your principles; be instant and earnest in prayer; and the God of peace will be with you."

In another letter to the same young friend, he says; "Your profession every day presents before you a most striking exhibition of the wisdom and goodness of God. In the wonderful contrivance of the *whole* animal frame you behold the wisdom; and in the adaptation of *each* part to the promotion of comfort, you see the goodness. But it is 'the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ,' which humbles, cheers, transforms, and blesses."

“Greenfield, January 2, 1821.

“MY DEAR E———, I should have redeemed my pledge and written to you sooner, if two causes had not interposed to prevent me. The first cause was this. I expected to have been in Rutland Street last Thursday evening, in my way to London. I had planned to enjoy two or three hours' conversation with you and yours; and, on my return to have spent a Sunday, and fulfilled my promise to Mr. H. But my journey is postponed, and perhaps it may be altogether unnecessary. When my travelling scheme was abandoned, and I had selected the precise day on which to write, I contrived to run my head in the dark against a sharp piece of wood. The blow shook my head to such a degree that I was glad to remain in idleness during the greatest part of last week. I am now comparatively well. I have been minute in assigning a reason, that you may not erroneously have concluded ‘out of sight, out of mind.’

“The coaches, my beloved child, have whirled you far beyond the ken of your poor earthly shepherd; but if they had whirled you to the Antipodes, they could not have conveyed you beyond the reach of his heart. My desires for your present comfort and your everlasting consolation would have remained as unabated as ever; and if I had the power to draw down peculiar supplies of the blessed Spirit, a portion of those supplies should be continually within *you*, making your countenance shine as if it were the face of an angel, and giving you an abundant earnest and foretaste of approaching glory.

“But why should I venture to speak of a ‘poor

earthly shepherd,' when I should be directing the eye of your faith and gratitude to the Chief Shepherd; to him who laid down his life for the sheep; to him who had *you* both in his eye and on his heart when he left the bosom of his father, and when he died on Calvary; and when he pronounced the golden promise on which he knew you would rest your soul's salvation—'And him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.' This single sentence, made alive and powerful by the Spirit's energy, has borne millions on its wings in safety, until it placed them, free from darkness, and enemies, and fears, and sins, before their Father's throne for ever. But we must be upon our guard that we do not suffer even invitations the most cordial and unfettered, and promises teeming with grace, and supported by immutability; nor the everlasting Covenant itself; nor the revealed and secured joys of the kingdom; to intercept our view of *him* who paid the price of his own blood for every blessing which can descend upon his people; and who purchased the right to reign in glory, as Mediator, until the whole church be 'saved to sin no more.' Yes, my dear E—r, let the Redeemer be the subject of your daily and steady contemplation:—the Redeemer, in the wonders of his Divine Person; in the strangeness of his humiliation; in the unconceivable dimensions of his love; in the declared efficacy of his sacrifice; in the fulness and eternity of his salvation. These views, if clear, repeated, and sanctified, will do great things for us. They will abase us, under the recollection of our great ingratitude towards such a friend: they will show us the character of our God, in its com-

pleneness and glory : they will make sin a hateful and a hated object ; and they will excite the inquiry, if anything can excite it, 'What shall we render ?'

"Your brother Richard is here, and on Christmas day devoted himself to the Lord at his holy table. What a mercy to be enabled to place himself under broader and better wings than those of Angels, during a very dangerous period of life ; when inward sin is ready to combine with an outward enemy to rivet upon the soul the chains of a miserable and disgraceful bondage. Your prayers, my E., have often ascended on his behalf ; and the Lord is giving you encouragement to pray on.

"I called yesterday on our dear E. ; she is far from strong ; but I hope and believe, not materially worse than when you left us. If my spiritual vision be not very indistinct, I venture to say that the Spirit's seal upon her soul becomes increasingly visible. She requested me to say that as I intended to write to day, she would not write until next week. Farewell, my very dear E—r. If any new events should occur which should seem to render a journey into the South necessary, a prospect of coldness and fatigue will, I am sure, receive alleviation from the circumstance that I shall expect to see in my journey, a lamb, a child, and a friend.  
\* \* \* May the year which is opening, prove to you a year of jubilee indeed ; a year of spiritual liberty and spiritual rejoicing."

The distractions of the metropolis, to which he was called by business two months later, failed to disengage his mind from the affectionate consideration of the subject of his habitual meditations.

To the same correspondent he addressed the annexed letter.

"MY DEAR E—r.—I thank you for your kind *note*, received this morning. If my recollection does not fail me, I promised in my letter of Friday that if any alteration, as to the time I expected to leave town, should be made, I would inform you. Instead of leaving on Tuesday, as I thought, it will be Friday or Saturday at the earliest. It may possibly be next Monday. Not being a man of business, I calculated upon a celerity in making up accounts which I find was impracticable. However, I hope that on Friday I may see Rutland Street. If I should leave on Saturday, pray tell dear Mr. H. that a journey of 98 miles would make it impossible or inexpedient that I should render him any assistance on the following day.

"I have not heard from home this morning, as I expected, and I am rather alarmed. I have received a newspaper directed by Mrs. Housman, and that is all. As she is very punctual in writing, I fear that some at Greenfield are indisposed. If you, my dear E—r, should hear from Lancaster on or before Wednesday morning, and if there should be any communication in your letter concerning Greenfield, have the goodness instantly to inform me. It is comfortable to have *nerves* when our wishes are proceeding towards accomplishment; but not quite so pleasant to have their sensibility aroused by disappointment and apprehensions. But 'the Lord reigneth,' and he will 'do all things well.'

"Yesterday I had three full repasts. I heard Mr. Budd in the morning; Mr. Wilkinson in the



afternoon; and Mr. Wilson in the evening. Mr. Budd's was a sensible, good sermon; Mr. Wilkinson's was very savoury, from 1 Tim. i. 16; and Mr. Wilson's, especially under the third head, was very superior. His text was 'Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.' His divisions were

"1. *The Character*—'The Lamb of God.'

"2. *The benefit he bestows*—'Taketh away the sin of the world?'

"3. *The regard due to him*—'Behold!'

"It was observed that he should be beheld, or regarded with

"(1.) *Attention.*

"(2.) *In a penitent frame of heart.*

"(3.) *With humble faith*; which was described as a resting—a reposing.

"(4.) *With love and thankfulness.*

"(5.) *At all times*—in sorrow, and temptation, and sickness, and death.

"They who thus behold him, will behold him in his kingdom: 'And there stood a Lamb as it had been slain,' &c., &c. Under the first subdivision, of being regarded with 'attention,' Mr. Wilson was very great, and shewed the criminality and danger of being *careless* as to beholding the Saviour. In his address to the careless he offered this striking observation; 'The magnitude of the mercy which you slight, will be the measure of your eternal condemnation.' Oh! my E—r, when the Lord gave you the disposition to attend to the Saviour as your refuge, your sacrifice, and your All, he gave you the pledge that you shall enjoy him eternally in the world of light and love."

"Tuesday Evening, July 31, 1821.

"MY DEAR E.—That I may avail myself of the first post to Silverdale, whether the usual or an extra one, I seize an early moment in the week to write a note to the friend whom I highly esteem, and the child whom I much love.

"I should rejoice to hear that you were altogether recovered from the severe attack in your head, and indeed from all other attacks, both in the head and heart. But when will this be? While we are in this earthly tabernacle, often, ah! often will the head beat with pain, and the heart be grieved with the existence and importunities of sin. But if suffering in the head quickens us to spiritual diligence when the pain has abated, and if evil in the heart be accompanied by self-loathing, and by an application of confidence to the gracious Redeemer of souls, and by fervency of prayer for the purification of the Spirit, then will pain be mercy; and then even the stirrings and the strivings of lamented depravity will work, through the Lord's overruling wisdom and grace, to a deeper sense of the value of his salvation, and of the fidelity of his promise, and of the glory of 'the rest which remaineth.' Let us press forward, daily exercising repentance for sin, and daily renewing our acceptance of Jesus, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption; and even angels might envy our prospects. Angels are happy; but whether their felicity can equal the felicity of those who are brought to heaven through the infinitely precious ransom of a Redeemer's blood is perhaps uncertain.

"If every other facility for visiting my dear friends in their beautiful seclusion were afforded, I

rather think that St. Anne would, during the present summer and autumn, fix me immovably at Lancaster. She clings about me with such a firm grasp that it does not appear that I can be disentangled from her Saintship, even for a day. I have appointed to meet the children of the congregation at the chapel every Wednesday evening. On a Monday I am generally too much fatigued to undertake a ride with much comfort. During the four other days I shall have *two* sermons to prepare, besides visiting the sick, &c. I have said *two* sermons. Mr. D. has complained, that *coming* to Lancaster, after his morning service at Warton, wearies him; and that *when he is come* his nerves are unpleasantly exercised, under the persuasion that the congregation will not be satisfied. Our connexion therefore is dissolved. I am 'confident of this very thing,' that the Lord will either send help or strength; and either will do. I have not a moment's anxiety upon the point. And if it should be appointed, in the counsels of eternal wisdom, that I should not only 'spend' but 'be spent,' even to dissolution, in the work immediately before me; my last sermon, if I knew which would be the last, would probably be from this text—'And him that cometh unto me I will *in no wise* cast out.' But something prompts me to conclude, 'I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.'

"If perchance you should see 'a little ewe lamb,' lying down 'in green pastures' (for green pastures spring up wherever they are earnestly sought) tell her that a very unworthy under-shepherd at Lancaster remembers her with cordial affection.

"At a late meeting of our Bible Society, a very

apposite and forcible observation as to the utility of Sunday Schools, was made by one of the speakers. He said, 'If it were possible that all the Bibles could be banished from the land, a fresh copy might be written from the collective memories of Sunday School scholars.' I should think that a girl in your class (E. B.) might almost furnish a hundredth part of the whole.

"The same speaker narrated an interesting anecdote of an Irish girl whom he knew. She was in the habit of reading the Bible to her mother, who I think was either sick or infirm. A Catholic priest came into the cottage. He saw the Bible: he threw it into the fire in anger, and it was consumed. The poor girl was much affected and cried out, 'He has burnt my Bible; but I have got off two chapters and he cannot burn them.'

"May we, my dear E., have the word so engrafted *in our hearts*, that even the fire of the Great Day shall not be able to touch the sacred record."

"Lancaster, May 24, 1821.

"MY DEAR RICHARD.—I am really grieved that I have suffered so long a time to elapse without writing to you. I seem to think that two journeys to London, and a variety of business, some usual and some unusual, will almost furnish me with an apology. But I probably cannot much mend the matter by dwelling on the subject. I shall therefore dismiss it with the usual observation, 'Better late than never.' I have heard of you from your young and pious friend Thomas Burrow;\* and I was glad to hear that your mind continues to have an upward direction. You will receive this as an

\* Now perpetual Curate of Pinner, near Harrow.

intimation of the Lord's favour towards you. It was not born with you. Everything by nature would lead you *from* God. Blindness, and hardness, and alienation—these are the things we may call our own. But a real thirst for God as a portion, and a hearty acquiescence in Jesus as the way to the Father, are the effects of grace, the work of the Spirit's power, and the earnestness of an everlasting salvation. These dispositions are exotics, planted in a very unfriendly soil, and appointed to bear many a blast from the world, the flesh, and the devil. And, being exotics, they must be cautiously and constantly cherished and strengthened. The dispositions which have a heavenward direction, must be cherished and strengthened.

"1. *By serious and frequent thought.* We should meditate on those subjects, which have a tendency to affect the heart. The value of the soul, the danger of its being lost, the vast blessedness of its being eternally saved, the Christian's enemies and the Christian's hopes, should by turns be brought steadily into view, and not suffered to escape before they are felt upon the soul.

"2. *By daily attention to the Scriptures.* Here the Great God is continually addressing us. Here he reveals himself—his majesty, holiness, mercy, and truth; and, to suit our feeble capacities and our guilty consciences, he reveals himself as dwelling in the human nature of Jesus, as in a Temple, and calls himself Immanuel. Here he likewise reveals our relations and obligations to him, and our rebellions against him; the methods of his mercy, and the wonders of his salvation; and addresses our fears and hopes, and all the powers of

our souls. And the substance of his addresses is this, 'Give me thine heart.'

"3.—*By much and earnest prayer.* Our supplications should ascend daily for manifold blessings, but the three following should certainly be the most prominent;—that we may see, and be humbled by our exceeding sinfulness; that we may behold, through the Spirit's light, the sufficiency of the sacrifice of Jesus, and that we may rest upon it simply and only, as all our salvation; that we may so behold the Redeemer's love and loveliness that we may love him supremely, and, from the principle of love, that we may do his will, and have a zeal for his glory, and a meetness for his holy kingdom.

"4. *By a devout attendance on the sacred ordinance of the Sacrament.* Here the symbols of redeeming mercy are placed before our senses; here the command and privilege of a Saviour's grace meet us—'Eat, O! friends, and drink, O! beloved;' here many a weary pilgrim receives a cordial to refresh him on his way; and here we offer unto the Lord 'ourselves, our souls, and bodies.'

"The four means of grace which I have mentioned, are certainly of prime importance. I trust that you, my dear Richard, will attend upon them duly. Press forward, humbly but earnestly. Regard not the world's reproaches. The Saviour was called Beelzebub, and his faithful followers must likewise be stigmatized. But to possess confidence and to wear a smile as you go through the valley of the shadow of death, and to sing the song of thankfulness and victory amidst the solemnities of the Day of Judgment, will exhibit indeed the

wisdom of having been religious, and will lead on to an immortality of glory.\*

Mr. Housman had always a great objection to the private administration of the Lord's Supper, particularly to the dying, and avoided it whenever he could. The temptation to attach efficacy to the ordinance (of which, in common with evangelical pastors of all denominations, he was painfully sensible) seems to be peculiarly strengthened by the circumstances attending an *extraordinary* reception of the symbolical body and blood of Christ. The commemorative and representative character of the act is especially liable to become merged in the spiritual advantages supposed to be connected, *somehow or other*, necessarily with it; and, by a transition neither difficult nor slow, that which is really but a *means* of promoting a sweet and lively intercourse with the blessed Saviour, to be converted, by the ready alchymy of a deceitful will, into a sort of Saviour itself. What is done exclusively for *one*, assumes a more awful and momentous significancy than what is done equally for *many*. It flatters self. It expands veneration into superstition. There is an imposing and mysterious impor-

\* In reference to one of the journeys mentioned in this letter, I find the following passage in a letter to a relative. "I have been mercifully preserved through rather a long journey. Divine protection was graciously thrown around me; therefore I am restored to my family, my friends, and my flock. If I were to begin to set up Ebenezers, where is the place where a very high one would not raise its head? Let us be in the habit, my dear L. of taking a two-fold view; a view of the *Lord's love* in every comfort we enjoy; and a view of our *great unworthiness* of the slightest token of his goodness. The combined view would have a twofold effect; it would excite humiliation and praise; affections pleasant in immediate exercise, and blessed preparations for standing before THE THRONE."

tance about it which begets or cherishes the vague idea of a charm, a passport, and a spell; and when an idea, though never so vague, is once felt to be comfortable, it stands a great chance (such are the short sighted tendencies of our being) of growing both definite and durable. They who enjoyed the privilege of an *intimate* acquaintance with Mr. Housman, and the benefit of a confidential disclosure of his sentiments, do not need to be told how well he knew the proneness of men to rely upon vicarious or ritual religion; how keenly alive he was to the prevalency of this notion, and its dangerous consequences; and with what scrupulous care he guarded himself from giving it a moment's encouragement or indulgence. "Often have I mourned" (it is thus he writes in the year 1798) "over the ignorance and superstition which have desired me to administer the Lord's Supper to a dying fellow creature, who, possessing no true views of sin, was consequently without repentance; possessing no true conception of the Saviour, was consequently without faith in his atoning blood; and possessing no conviction of the necessity of a change of heart, was consequently without that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. God forbid that we should employ this last and eleventh hour in fostering delusion. Rather, let us send up our fervent prayers to the Father of mercies, that he would manifest his compassion and grace, and enable the dying to look up, in a spirit of humble penitence, to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world. Then like the thief upon the cross. he *may* be saved—'yet so as by fire.'"



The *opus operatum*, which is Antinomianism in its absurdest form, found no friend in Mr. Housman.

It is important to remark, in connexion with this subject, that he was in the habit of *inviting* his congregation to the Lord's table, not of *driving* them to it. He represented the act of communicating as a *privilege*; and sought, by persuasive exhibitions of the vast and precious grace of redemption, to win his people to a reception of the love-memorials of their dying Redeemer. To insist, as some ministers do, upon the absolute indispensableness of joining the sacred feast, approaches the doctrine of sacramental efficacy.

In the next letter, the basis of Christian friendship (that is, the basis of the highest order of the best and noblest sort of friendship) is beautifully described.

“MY DEAR E.—I thank you for your note. It was E. altogether. From kindness I expect nothing but what is kind, notwithstanding your occasional cautions and surmises concerning your probable instability. My sanguine mode of thinking and feeling precludes me from entering into these cold calculations. From the troubled sea I expect nothing but fluctuations; and from a more changing world I look for nothing but change. Its poor inhabitants, having no principle better than selfishness, and no resting place higher than the earth, must needs be roving from variety to variety, ever anxious and ever inquiring ‘Who will show us any good?’ But Christian regard is surely fixed upon a more stable basis, and its superstructure raised with more precious materials. Its basis is a mutual interest in the ‘great salvation;’ and the

materials of the superstructure are, a participation of the same hopes and fears, joys and sorrows, conflicts and victories, means and privileges, promises and prospects; and the cementing influence which unites the heart of one believer more strongly to another rather than to a third or a fourth, is, a congeniality in disposition, combined with the opportunity of exercising successive acts of confidence and kindness. Christian regard, thus formed, will, I believe, continue firm, so long as religious principle rules in the soul.

"I should rejoice to see your 'Garden of Eden,' now that *the serpent* is destroyed. If I could bring along with me a heart free from the poison of the 'Old Serpent,' and find your heart under the same blessed freedom, what a day could we spend at Silverdale! How deeply could we drink of that river, the streams of which make glad the City of God! We should eat angels' food. The woods and the hills on every side would be taught by us to reverberate the Redeemer's praise. We should not envy the Apostle what he heard or saw in the third heaven. The Lord would be near, and adored, and enjoyed; and our joy would be full. But alas! the delightful vision is not yet to be realized. The whole head is still sick and the whole heart is still faint. We have still to feel the poison, and the misery, and the danger. But the promise is exhilarating and is sure—'The God of peace will bruise Satan under your feet *shortly*.' Let us plead the promise, and pray with fervency, and the 'shortly' may be with us before another sun shall rise.

"You are aware that Mr. D. will be at Kendal

on Sunday, and that a plan was formed for Mr. B. being at St. Anne's in the afternoon. But all things considered I think it best that your minister should remain at Silverdale. If there had not been many *ifs* stepping forward with their officious interposition, such as—*If* I had seen my way quite clear, as to the propriety of leaving St. Anne's, under existing circumstances, for a whole day; and *if* I had possessed the command of a pony; and *if* no suspicion had crossed my mind concerning the expediency of Sunday travelling, without an absolute necessity; and *if* I had not reason to suspect that the *motive* of proposing an exchange with Mr. B. might be not to advance the cause of Christ, but to see my Silverdale friends; if these, and perhaps an *etcetera* of *ifs*, had not interposed, I believe I should have asked your minister to exchange with me the duties of the whole day, and I should have been at Silverdale about nine in the morning, and continued until after tea. But you see from the number and nature of my *ifs*, that the plan was impracticable.

“My kind respects to all under your roof. You have now a pony. You must remember that want of employment is bad for man, and (perhaps) for *beast*. You must not therefore, be accessory to any evil tricks of your animal, by suffering him to eat and not to work. Ride out every day; and thus consult your own health, and your pony's *morals*.

“Monday, Dec. 17, 1821.

“MY DEAR MISS W.—You will be surprised at receiving a note from me. I have a slight message to send to your kind father; and the circumstance of *writing* to you, in order to request that you

would have the goodness to become the medium of the communication, is gratifying to the cordial esteem and Christian affection which I feel for you.

“The message is simply this. A young man of the name of Dixon is a candidate for orders, with the view to become my assistant. In the Title which I sent to the Bishop, I spelled his name Dickson, instead of Dixon. It may be necessary to mention this mistake.

“I hear that your dear friend Miss W. is expected at Lune Bank. I wish you could have accompanied her. It is pleasant to see the Lord’s people coming from the East, and the West, and the North, and the South ; bearing the same testimony ; humbled under the same views of sin ; encouraged by the same *unfettered* invitations ; looking to the same Cross for mercy ; and living dependant, for the needed supplies of grace, on the same exalted Head of the Church. This identity of character shows that they are taught by the same Spirit, and is a perpetual fulfilment of the promise, ‘And I will give them one heart and one way.’

“I trust, my dear child, that you are now walking, at least frequently, with your head above the clouds. If you be willing to be the Lord’s, I am sure that he is willing to be your Saviour : nay, your willingness was the fruit of his. What a consideration !—that he should even supplicate the rebellious (2 Cor. v. 20.) How certain, then, the success of *our* supplications ; unless we should admit the blasphemous supposition, that after his invitations and entreaties had been the means of exciting our desires, and prayers, and expectations, he should determine to leave unsatisfied the hopes which he himself had raised.”

The Rev. Myles Dixon, whose name occurs in this letter, was for several years Mr. Housman's curate, in the discharge of which responsible and honourable office, he succeeded in obtaining the confidence and regard of both minister and congregation of St. Anne's. Between Mr. Housman and him the strongest attachment subsisted. "I write to you," says the former, in the year 1833, "under the pleasant and significant appellation of *friend*. I have found you to be faithful and affectionate; and in going through life I have found very few to be such. The leaven of all-controlling *self* spoils the fair mass." And a few months later he says, "I am much in your debt, in the account of correspondence; and, I believe, being on the verge of 75 years of age, I must continue your debtor still. But though I do not *write* I can *feel*; and there is no one whose kindness I can feel more than I do yours." Mr. Dixon was succeeded in the curacy of St. Anne's by the Rev. James Statter, of whom affectionate mention is made by Mr. Housman in the following extract from a letter, dated April 15th, 1833, to the Rev. M. A. Collisson, Minister of Bishop Ryder's Church, Birmingham. "I have exercised my ministry in St. Anne's nearly thirty-seven years; and I believe, under no slight blessing from the gracious Head of the Church. \* \* I ventured to state to Dr. Singer, three requisites which I should wish to find in an Assistant; namely, sound evangelical principles; a good voice; and a *mild persuasive manner, suited to the merciful genius of the gospel of the grace of God*. It is of great consequence that an Incumbent and his Assistant should concur, as nearly as possible, in their views.

manner and plans. The prosperity of their congregation (at least their comfort) depends in a great measure upon the union and cordiality of the two ministers. Mr. Statter and I walked together 'in the House of God as friends.' "

" Greenfield.

"MY DEAR MISS W.—Mrs. T. H. has just sent to me two copies of a very luminous statement of divine truth and of Christian experience and practice, received from you, and written by Mr. Henry Parker. I take the opportunity of the return of the person who brought the parcel, to return you my affectionate thanks for the very kind present which I received on your leaving Lancaster. To live in the remembrance, and the hearts, and the prayers, of the Lord's redeemed people, is an inestimable privilege. Among the redeemed, the free grace of God in Christ has placed *you*; your experience determines the point. A thorough conviction of our lost estate as sinners, and of the insufficiency of the world to give us peace, and *the consent of the will* to receive Christ as our righteousness and sanctification and redemption, are decisive evidences; for nothing truly of this kind can be received except it be given from heaven. Go forward, my dear J., humbly and earnestly endeavouring daily to realize the glory, and love, and work, of Immanuel; and I confidently anticipate these results—a growth in grace, evidenced by increasing humiliation; more habitual consolation; a life of peace, though surrounded with external trials; and a death of triumph."

" 1821.

"MY DEAR CHILD.—I was truly rejoiced to hear that Silverdale had been the means of recruiting you considerably. I like the word 'means.' It reminds me of the great and beneficent *Agent* of all good. 'I am the Lord that healeth thee,' is a scripture which should excite dependence in the time of need, and excite adoring thankfulness when the restoring hand of mercy has been stretched forth.

"How much, my dear E., do you owe unto the Lord! He has given you the great talent of a feeble constitution. In a robust frame there is a sad tendency to say unto the soul, 'Soul, thou hast much good laid up for *many* years.' In a weaker frame, such as yours and mine, the reflection will, or at least *ought* to be, forced upon us—'The tottering tabernacle must soon come down.' And let it come down, and let us rejoice in every symptom of its speedy dissolution, if, through grace, we are enabled to say, 'We have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'

"The poor man whom I visited was S—y. Both his body and mind seem nearly gone, and I fear that he knows but little of himself, and less of the Saviour. The question was asked him by a good man, 'Do you think that Christ *can* save you?' He replied, 'I believe he can, but I will not ask him.' Rebellion and enmity were here in full and infernal exercise. Who made thee, E., to differ? Who gave thee the willing mind, and at times the thirsty soul? He who said 'And whosoever *will*, let him take the water of life *freely*.'"

Of what are called death-bed repentances, Mr.

Housman had no great opinion. "I do not say," he thus writes in the year 1827, "that an eleventh hour is not *sometimes* distinguished by the outpouring and the triumphs of abounding grace; but I do say, from long and very painful observation, that the *general* state of mind in which triflers with their souls meet the approach and the stroke of death, is either *stupor* or *horror*, and, in either case they are driven away in their wickedness." Nay even in the majority of cases in which comparative calmness and composure of mind are united with an unfeigned sense of the sinfulness and deep pollution of sin, (and Mr. Housman had known many such) salvation, it is to be feared, is but a dark and awful problem. And why? Because (apart from the certainty that repentance denotes something infinitely more complicated and substantial than a bare sentiment of regret—being, in point of fact, a radical change or renewedness of disposition and principle) salvation includes not merely the initial work of *pardon*, which is external—but the whole ulterior work of sanctification, which is wrought *in* us; and because this work, without which no one shall see God, is, in the ordinary economy of divine grace, progressive. That it is more or less rapid in different persons, and that "one may advance more in an hour than another in a long life," is however true; and this truth, coupled with the blessed and consolatory fact that God *desireth* not the death of a sinner, may *perhaps* justify the conclusion, that on behalf of those who really and contritely *feel* their defilements, though lying on the very verge of the eternal world, the transforming energies of the Holy Spirit may be graciously applied with sudden or even instantaneous effect.



The peradventure, it must be admitted, yields but a vague and comfortless foundation. What better can be offered? "There is no other covenant for dying men," says Jeremy Taylor, "than that which has been made with the living and healthful:" and it may be added, as a warning against procrastination, that the Gospel was never resisted without leaving the heart of the resister more hard and uncomplying than it found it, less susceptible of the emotions designed to be produced, and less capable of responding efficiently to a future appeal.

Whatever may be the purposes of God in respect of extreme instances of repentance, one thing is certain (and it is a truth which cannot be too often or too urgently proclaimed, since it is indispensable to a right understanding of the nature and end of religion) that unless the image of Christ be formed within us *now*, we shall never awake in his likeness hereafter. Unless we walk with God below, there can be no preparation for living in his presence above. If Mercy be the *first* gate through which the sinner passes into "the kingdom," Holiness is the second; he must pass through both. "Grace," says good old Berridge, "is the blossom-bud of glory." It appears, and is beautiful in this life; it unfolds and is perfected in the next. The views, the tempers, the employments, the enjoyments of both worlds are the same; they only differ in degree. The love and the habits of evil dreadfully expand, when the horrors of the grave are traversed; the love and the adoration of the people of God immeasurably enlarge, when mortality is swallowed up of life. Mankind take into the everlasting state the dispositions they had here indulged;

and whether they rise from glory to glory, or, consistently with our experience of the nature and laws of mind, sink from anguish to anguish, will depend upon whether, whilst here, they walked with God or walked with Satan. Walking with God is an unavoidable prerequisite of reigning with Christ. We shall never dwell with the Lord in heaven, if the Lord has not dwelt with us on earth. Heaven, in fact, as well as hell, *begins* on earth. To admit Christ into the heart, is to admit heaven into the heart; to retain the world in the heart, is to retain hell in the heart. The future is not *distinct* from the present, but only *remote* from it. It is essentially *a part* of the present, united by a succession of undiscovered periods and events. The future life is the present life *extended*; the present life stretched out, either into the regions of light and gladness, or into the regions of gloom and sorrow. It is (to adopt the significant language of Bishop Butler) a "going on" of the present: the dissolution of the human body, which we call death, being, in the dispensation of divine government, the appointed process of introduction to that incomparably awful portion of existence which lies beyond the limits and dominion of sense.

The following letters—the first written in acknowledgment of a bag of nuts, the second of a present of apples—are in exact accordance with a principle laid down by Bishop Wilson in his valuable *Maxims of Piety*. 'the way to advance in Christian perfection,' says that admirable prelate, 'is to make Christian reflections upon every occurrence of life, and to endeavour to improve by them.' This Mr. Housman was accustomed to do, in an

eminent degree, especially in conversation. Probably few men have been more successful in associating accidental circumstances with spiritual and profitable observation; in connecting the transitory events of time with the coming eternity.

“MY DEAR E—R.—It has been said ‘There is love in a nut.’ The meaning, I imagine, is this;—the gift of a nut manifests love in the giver. If this be true many nuts must show much love; and the gift of many and rich nuts will indicate much and rich love; rich in quality of true Christian produce; rich in degree, generous and ‘fervent;’ and rich in duration, when sun, and moon, and stars, are swept from the firmament. You see, my dear E—r, what bold inferences I am drawing from your kind present of a bag of nuts.

“And what equivalent can I offer for the many treats which your present will furnish? I can bestow but little, but I can remind you where much indeed is to be obtained; and perhaps, though very unworthy of the office and honour, I may in some measure be the appointed means of introducing you to heavenly fare. I can tell you of ‘wine and milk’—the one to nourish, and the other to exhilarate. I can set before you ‘marrow and fatness,’ and assure you that the Founder of the feast is always saying, ‘Eat, O friends, and drink, O Beloved.’ I can point to the ‘Banqueting House,’ where the ‘banner’ over all who enter is ‘LOVE;’ and where the guests receive an assurance that they shall sit down to ‘the marriage-supper of the Lamb in glory.’

“I know not whether Mary Ann B—d were in your class in the Sunday School, or in the next.

Be this as it may, she is dead of the fever, and is gone to heaven. She left bright evidence indeed during her illness, that her heart was with Christ, and that her soul possessed and enjoyed salvation.

“My kind love to dear E.; I hope her journey will not have injured her. Miss B., though very weak, is recovered. She has been on the verge of heaven, in her views and consolations.”

“Saturday, 12 o'clock.

“MY DEAR E.—May I request that you will have the goodness to present my best respects and thanks to your kind father for his very welcome present of most beautiful and delicious apples. The apples are valuable; the disposition which sent them, of much higher value. We can always see the kindness of our earthly friends in their various remembrances; why is it that we do not always see the kindness of a heavenly benefactor? Is it that the gifts are so incessant that they cease to impress?—or that they are so large as to intercept between the eye and the giver? Is it not rather that domineering depravity blinds and stupifies? The true secret of happiness, however, consists in the habitual perception of the Lord's adorable character, manifested in what he has both said and done, and in the habitual enjoyment of the moral beauty. ‘We shall see him as he is,’ will be heaven.

“I ask myself—why does not the moral garden of my soul produce fruit as comely, and excellent, and abundant as the natural garden at Silverdale produces in its kind and way? The sun shines at Silverdale;—the Sun of Righteousness is ever ready to shine into the heart. The rains descend at Silverdale;—‘I will be as the dew unto Israel’ is

the promise. The coldness and the frosts of winter prevent the trees at Silverdale from being proudly luxuriant in leaves and boughs, which would make them unproductive;—and have no merciful darkness, and coldness, and storms, been sent to check *my* aspirings? They *have* been sent, in gracious abundance. Why, then, Oh! why does not my soul exhibit just such fruitfulness as the garden from whence these apples have been sent? In the garden there is no counteracting principle; in the soul there is a principle poisoned even with enmity against the heavenly husbandman. But grace can triumph: yea and will triumph, and will make the soul which honestly seeks salvation—partially here, and perfectly hereafter—‘as the garden of the Lord.’

“But I am forgetting my sermon, to remember my friend. Farewell.”

Mr. Housman has been called a Calvinist, and he was one. He was such a Calvinist as Baxter; and having said this, I leave the question sufficiently obscure. Like Baxter, ‘he was too good a theologian to base accountability upon grace, and too practical a philosopher to theorise on passive power.’\* But with these and similar hard and perilous matters, “foreknowledge,” will, and fate—fixed fate, free-will, “foreknowledge absolute” he wisely refrained from interfering. For a solution of “all mysteries” he was content *to wait*; content to forego the gratification of his curiosity, until “that which is perfect” shall have “come.” This he knew, and this he preached—that the *offer* of salvation is made to ALL, and that the mercy of God endureth for ever; that the fountain of life has been

\* Philip’s Baxter, p. 37.

opened, and that *any* who are athirst may take of its waters freely; and that the humble and diligent use of the appointed means of grace, leads infallibly to the "fulness of joy." The freeness and universality of the overtures of the Gospel were constant themes of his adoring praise. "It is a frequent and a very favourite employment of mine," he says, "to endeavour to display before my people the boundless mercy of the Father, the boundless merits of the Son, and the boundless grace of the Holy Ghost. I wish to exhibit, and I strive to exhibit redemption in something of its glorious fulness, and to sound abroad the cheering declaration, 'Yet there is room.' I am anxious, and I eagerly seek, to set forth the Divine Being as that Being has revealed himself—merciful, and gracious, and long suffering, and *abundant* in goodness and truth.'" The annexed letter shows how judiciously he discouraged a disposition to frequent the high and barren places of divinity. What Burnet calls "the great sublimities" of speculation, had for him no attractiveness. Few men knew better than he, that elaborate disquisitions on remote and uncertain topics of Christianity too generally operate as splendid screen-work, hiding the truth they were intended to glorify. Godly edification was his object; godly edification urged by the "impressive simplicities" and "honest assurances" of the gospel. This object absorbed him. He longed for nothing so earnestly as *the salvation* of his hearers. He worked for eternity, and he worked in the continual view of eternity. Regarding mankind, if not exclusively, at least mainly, in their final relation to another state of being, and in the

grand element of their undying existence, his ministrations, both in the pulpit and out of it, were solemn, emphatic, and uncompromisingly direct. His appeals were to the conscience, not to the curiosity. For himself and for others (to use the words of Dr. John Owen) "he had one great business in hand, and comparatively one only—namely, 'the one thing needful,' 'the better part;,' to be growing daily in the power of divine grace, in the spiritual mind, in faith, in love, in fervency of prayer, in holy meditation," in likeness to Christ, the hope of glory. He habitually lived and spoke as he would wish to be found living and speaking, when death, the sharp ender of controversies, should approach.

"Greenfield, March 27, 1822.

"MY DEAR RICHARD.—I am sorry that I have been so long in paying you that attention which for some time it has been my wish to do. But frequent pains in the head, and a multitude of avocations, must plead my excuse in some degree. Nothing, however, can properly apologize, for epistolary idleness; and with this evil I am justly and generally chargeable.

"I have been gratified in learning that your face is still toward heaven, though in weariness, and in fear, and in much trembling. 'Faint yet pursuing' is a good Christian motto; and he to whom it legitimately belongs is not far from the kingdom of God. I have heard that you have been puzzled with the high points of Predestination and Election. Doctrines which may be safe and profitable in one state of the mind, may be unsafe and unprofitable in another. A child requires milk, and not strong meat; and that person would be an unskillful

nurse who should attempt to cram the child with food which its feeble powers of digestion could not convert into wholesome nutriment. It was the habit of the good, and wise, and tender Shepherd of Israel, to teach his followers '*as they were able to bear it.*' If we had been long confined in a dark room, and were brought suddenly into a meridian light, our eyes would be dazzled, overpowered, and almost put out. A farthing rushlight, and that at some distance, would be the only lustre we ought at first to encounter. Just so should it be with those who are only emerging from the darkness of nature. *There are two truths, prior in point of time and paramount as to importance, which should engage the attention; I mean 'repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ.'* By 'repentance' I mean that lowly frame of the heart which becomes us as sinners, and which arises from a proper perception of our relations and obligations unto God, and of our base and multiplied offences against him. This 'perception' the Holy Spirit can alone bestow: but the precious gift is promised to all who ask. After the daily experience and exercise of this repentance, you, my young friend, must continually press; and just in proportion as you perceive something of the glorious character of God, as revealed in the Son of his love, and perceive, at the same time, your own extreme unworthiness, will you take up the language of Job, 'I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.' But repentance blots out no sin. It is therefore necessary to be daily pressing through hosts of difficul-



ties and sins, and to be reposing the soul on the sufficient attonement of the blessed Immanuel.— This reposing of the soul on the Saviour, arising from an approbation of, and acquiescence in, his great salvation, is “the gift of God.” It is to be sought in reading the word which testifies of Jesus; in praying for the Spirit whose office it is to glorify Christ; and in humble and frequent meditation on his love, his sacrifice, his intercession, his invitations, and his promises. To the attaining of a large measure of this repentance and faith, let your attention be directed. To these two dispositions of the mind, the richest promises are made.

“If the means are used with faithfulness, the two grand blessings will certainly be received : and the consciousness of possessing them will be received likewise. Then peace will flow in like a river; then hope will expand; then the love of a redeeming God will be shed abroad in the heart; and *then* you may safely encounter the study of Predestination and Election. But before the attainments I have mentioned, I could scarcely advise you to attend to these high points. They will perplex, but I think will not comfort you : afterwards they may comfort without perplexing. In the mean time remember that all sober-minded Calvinists and Arminians agree in one most essential particular : namely, that *all* who diligently seek will assuredly find ; and that they who do not seek will certainly perish.”

The policy of this letter was the uniform policy of his preaching and conversation. In both he discouraged the very common and mischievous propensity to scrutinize the hidden decrees and pur-

poses of heaven. The unyielding WILL which he exhibited in resisting every inquiry of a merely scientific character deserves indeed to be noticed as one of his most distinguishing peculiarities. It was displayed in early life, and it continued to the day of his death. With regard to the subject at present under consideration, it was enough for him to teach, and for others to know, that none can be called who do not love God, and that none who sincerely and perseveringly love God can fail to be of the number of the called. This simple and scriptural view of the case certainly does not remove the philosophical difficulties of the question ; but it is with something better than philosophical difficulties, it is with the pressing practical vitalities of religion, that Christian ministers have primarily and mainly to do. Not to the "wise" and the "prudent" is the mystery of godliness revealed, but to "babes." The kingdom of God must be *received*, if received at all, in an attitude of dependence—in the docile and humble spirit of a *little* child ; a fact, resting as it does upon the infallible testimony of Jesus, which seems to forbid, at least in the preliminary stages of conversion, by an implication the most absolute, the entertaining of obscure and intricate theories. It must not, however, be concealed, that though Mr. Housman experienced, both in public and in private, an insuperable dislike to the introduction of speculations exclusively Calvinistic, and always got rid of such topics as speedily and as completely as he was able, he shrank, with an equal degree of aversion, from the unconditional judgment too frequently passed upon them by rash and flippant declaimers. Writing

from Leicester upwards of fifty years ago, he thus records his opinions;—"Since so much is said in the Scriptures concerning God's having compassion according to his own purpose and grace, it becomes those who cannot yet receive the doctrine, not to speak against it. In your opposition to it, perhaps it may one day appear that you were fighting against God. The proper temper, then, in which we ought all of us to examine the doctrines of Scripture, is this—'*What I know not, teach thou me.*'" From the same communication the following is also taken.—"'Who maketh *thee* to differ from another?' There is no answer given to the question; and there is much beauty in the silence. Oh, for the exciting of your humility and thankfulness, attend to this subject. It was the Lord God, who, by his mighty power, and according to his sovereign pleasure, made *you* to differ from others. You were by nature a child of wrath, even as others. You possessed the same perverseness, ingratitude, and enmity against God. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved you hath quickened you. The same grace which quickened *you*, would, if given to another who *dies* in his sins, have quickened *him*; but God had mercy upon *you*, because he would have mercy. Let this thought be frequently indulged, and it will give a death-wound to your pride;—you will learn to say, even in your highest attainments, *By the grace of God I am what I am.* Consider likewise what the Scripture says in Ephes. i. 4. *He hath chosen us, &c.*, and in 1. Tim. ii. 9. *Who hath saved us, &c.* In these Scriptures we are informed that salvation, in all its stages, from the

foundation to the topstone, arises from the sovereign mercy and grace of God."

Whatever may have been Mr. Housman's deliberate and habitual opinions on this prolific source of controversial bitterness, they were never suffered, as I have previously hinted, to contract or mar the comprehensive and beautiful spirit in which the offers of salvation and the promises of Scripture are respectively made. Revelation, he knew, aims at the heart; and it was to the heart that he, as a minister of the revelation, directed his appeals. Never was preaching more free from the cold, dry, profitless theories of the schools; never was preaching more full of the life and the love, the pity and the tenderness, the generous and attractive catholicity of the religion of the meek and merciful weeper at the grave in Bethany.

"Without glancing at the controversy concerning the extent of the *efficacy* of the salvation of Christ," (it is thus he spoke in 1792) "few, I apprehend, will deny that the *offer* of it is made to ALL. 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.' 'If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.' 'Whosoever *will* let him take of the water of life freely.' Even the most hopeless characters are addressed with an affectionate importunity which no compassion less than divine would condescend to use. 'Hearken unto me, ye *stout-hearted*, that are far from righteousness; I bring near my righteousness: it shall not be far off, and my salvation shall not tarry.' Nay, the 'kings and the rulers of the earth,' who 'take counsel together against the Lord and against his Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away

their cords from us,' are intreated and commanded to 'kiss the Son,' and have a promise of blessedness if they 'trust in Him.' Here, then, is encouragement to the weak, if they feel their impotence; to the guilty, if they acknowledge their offences; to the enslaved, if they lament their bondage, and groan for deliverance; to the most depraved and detestable; to the very opposers of God, and the persecutors of his people, if they be willing to make application unto Jesus for pardon, grace, and salvation. He will in no wise cast you out. The door of mercy is set open in the Gospel; nor can the confederate hosts of hell, nor even the number and magnitude of your transgressions, shut it against you. Pray for strength that you may have ability to enter; and there will be joy in heaven at your recovery from ruin. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though your heart be in league with iniquity, it will renounce and abominate its idols; though destruction and misery are in your ways, you will rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

'Thirty-three years later he says:—

"ALL are welcome to come to Jesus Christ to receive forgiveness. The Brazen Serpent was lifted up as an *universal* remedy. *Every* wounded Israelite was permitted to look; and every one who did look, however distantly, however faintly, was healed. Just so it is with the Redeemer. From the Cross on Calvary this is the free invitation of his love; 'Look unto me and be ye saved, *all the ends of the earth.*' Was any wounded dying Israelite *forbidden* to look to the serpent of brass? Not one. Was any *prevented*? Not one. Neither is

any sinner forbidden; neither is any sinner prevented. All who please may look to the Lamb of God for healing and for cleansing, and for all the joys and glories of the everlasting covenant. It is written, 'WHOSOEVER believeth in him.' The full and the gracious 'WHOSOEVER' includes all who are willing. Nothing—no nothing—can bar against you the door of mercy, but unbelief. You may enter if you like:—oh! come in. The Saviour stands with open arms, as he hung on Calvary, and he will cast none out who fly to those arms for refuge. Fly to them—they are the arms of everlasting love."

In the following year (October 15th, 1826,) he speaks still more explicitly on the subject of the extent of Christ's death; and if the most unequivocal disavowal of the doctrine of particular redemption might be received as implying an equally express and unreserved disavowal of that of election, (though subtle and far-seeing theologians have determined otherwise) the subjoined extract would render superfluous any further conjectures respecting Mr. Housman's opinions on this subject.

"Upon the subjects of particular redemption and general redemption," he says, "the latter topic is written which ought not to have been written. When the grand and essential points are maintained as to their necessity, and maintained in truth, and simplicity, and experience—such as repentance towards God, faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, and regeneration by the Spirit—of what avail is controversy? It would be well to avoid it; for under the heat of controversy the Christian dispositions wither and die. They who hold *particular* re-

demption are earnest in arguing that Jesus Christ died for those only who will finally be benefitted by his mediation. They who hold *general* redemption are of opinion that Christ died for all; but that none can have the benefit of his death except those who flee to him for refuge, who hang upon his atonement, who feelingly *rest* upon him as the only Rock of Salvation, confessing their sins. This latter view seems to be the view of our truly evangelical Church. Look at the Communion Service. 'Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the Cross for our redemption; who made there, (by his one oblation of himself once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of *the whole world*,' &c. This latter view seems to me to be the view which the Holy Spirit has given us in the Bible. It is written—'who gave himself a ransom for all.' 'And he is a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of *the whole world*.' 'God so loved *the world*, that he gave his only-begotten Son.' Then follows the description of those who <sup>will</sup> be saved by Christ; 'that *who-soever* believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' And again; 'We all like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of *us all*.' But not to multiply scriptures which might be brought in abundance—'That he, by the grace of God, should taste death for *every man*.' Now, when I read in the Scriptures of eternal truth such language as this—'a ransom *for all*,' 'should taste death for *every man*,' 'a propitiation

for the sins of the *whole* world,' I dare not limit the expressions. I dare not restrict 'the *whole* world' to a *part* of the world, nor '*every* man' to *some* men. I dare not do this: I would take the comfort of these extensive declarations of mercy. I would dispense them as the word of the Spirit dispenses them, in all the length, and breadth, and depth, and height of the compassionate love they testify; and the *difficulties* that crowd about the question I would reverently leave to be explained by the all-wise God at the last day. In that day, upon a view of his now mysterious dispensations, the Hosts of Heaven will adoringly cry aloud—'He hath *written* all things, and he hath *done* all things well.' "

To the dogma of irrespective personal election, whether he held it or not, or in whatever degree he held it, it is certain that Mr. Housman never referred *as a ground of comfort*. Indeed, it exercised just as little influence over *him* as it did over those who walked with God, and beheld the glory of his countenance, under the Patriarchal and Jewish dispensations. From the pulpit, during a ministry of nearly sixty years' continuance, he had uniformly urged the *general* promises of the Gospel; and it was on these that he himself relied. It is worth remarking too, that whilst many very eminent Calvinists have been harassed in their dying moments by fears which seem to have been a re-action of this doctrine, Mr. Housman's mind, in the closing hours of life, was happily exempt from even the shadow of an apprehension. I do not believe that the slightest doubt ever crossed it. An undisturbed serenity, as brilliant as it was cloudless, possessed his soul.



“ August 10, 1822.

“MY DEAR E.—I have been distressed several times lately on hearing incidentally that you seem to gather no strength; or rather, that the pain in your stomach appears more permanent. He who loves you with an infinitely better and wiser love than any earthly friend can possess, appoints you every pain. Not a sparrow falls without his permission. Surely then, whoever has taken hold of the Covenant, by fleeing for refuge to the great gospel Hope, has nothing to fear when drooping with the severest anguish. He or she is of more value than many sparrows.—There is a golden chain, one end of which is held firmly by the hand of covenant and eternal mercy, and the other end is indissolubly fastened to the soul which believeth in Jesus. Upon *every* intermediate link, ‘Wisdom, Love, and Faithfulness,’ are written; and it is the business of faith, with its realizing eye, to read the writing, and to convey the joyful tidings to the afflicted child of God. It is but a short time, my dear E., and the unbroken chain will be drawn up to heaven; and the soul, secure in its grasp, will rejoice before THE THRONE. We are disposed to imagine that it would have been quite as safe, and much more pleasant, if every link had been *silken*; but, with all our sinfulness and all our wretched gravitation to the earth, the silk might have given way, and ruin have received us. If the chain has galled us, we should remember that it is formed of *gold*; and what we have lost in point of ease, we shall have gained in point of security.

“To a certain person whom I highly esteem and cordially love, and who perhaps will not be a mile

from your elbow when you read this note, pray offer my affectionate *remembrances*, and grateful acknowledgments for what was transmitted on Saturday last. May she and you, and all yours, and I and mine, enjoy all the blessedness which is connected inseparably with a full answer to the petition which I am endeavouring to consider as the subject for next Sunday—‘I beseech thee show me thy glory.’ Then, under the most clear, realizing perceptions of the solemnities of the Last Day, we should silence every alarm, in the language of a good man whom a friend of mine was privileged to see on a bed of sickness—‘I know the Judge.’

“Press forward, my dear friend, endeavouring to exercise daily humiliation for sin, and a daily acceptance of Christ, as wisdom and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption.”

The text here mentioned as forming the basis of a discourse, supplied him with a frequent subject of meditation during the declining months of his life. “Show me thy glory” he would often exclaim, in accents scarcely above a whisper; and occasionally, on perceiving that his fervent ejaculations were overheard, would expatiate upon the ennobling topic with somewhat of the spirit and power of former days. “Show me thy glory” he considered equivalent to “Show me thy goodness.”

The *glory* of the Lord, as an object of desire to sinners, is the moral loveliness of the Lord—exhibited, first in his pardoning mercy, and subsequently in his sanctifying grace; and the light of the knowledge of this glory shines with completed brightness in the face of Jesus Christ. To pray that we may see the glory of God, and to pray that we may at-

tain to ampler discoveries of the excellency of the Saviour, are, in fact, but different modifications of one and the same thing. "Beholding, as in a mirror the glory of the Lord," (and such a mirror is Immanuel, the express image of the Father) "we are changed into the *same* image, from glory to glory." The change is spiritual; the glory is holiness. "We have *sinned*, and come short of the glory of God." Here, by a way of contrast a figure in which the apostolic writings abound, the matter is conclusively explained. The Glory of God, and sin, being put in direct opposition, the former is manifestly shown to be perfect moral or spiritual purity. Light and Love—purity of nature and benevolence of character; *this* is the glory of the Lord God Almighty, and the Lamb.

"Friday Morning, Sept. 20, 1822.

"MY VERY DEAR FRIENDS.—The vicissitude of seasons has many comforts. In Winter we anticipate Spring, and a renovated earth. In Spring we are often chilled with what we call ungenial weather, and are pleased with the prospect of Summer's warmth. In Summer we look forward to the luxuriant abundance of Autumn; and in Autumn we enjoy the prospect of a Winter evening's fire. But does Autumn give rise to no other anticipation of pleasure? For several seasons *I* have enjoyed the prospect of the Silverdale swallows migrating back again to the warmer climate of a town habitation. Another month will, I hope, bring you. They who, in this life, expect *many* friends (I mean such as deserve the name) will surely be disappointed. When we have found a few, we should surely make much of them; and the anticipated comfort of meeting them after a long absence is not of small

estimation. But friends, and all things else, are only to us, in point of solid joy, what the Lord is pleased to make them.

“We have lately had Mr. Ruell in our School-room, giving a most interesting account of the present prospects of the Society for Promoting Christianity among the Jews. When there is an arrival of Hebrew Testaments (I think in Berlin) it requires the aid of the military to prevent the distributors of the Testaments from being trodden down by the Jews, in their excessive ardour to obtain what they so much value. In Poland and in Russia mighty things are coming to pass. At the present moment there is a young converted Jew of the name of Wolfe, actually proclaiming the Messiah in that very Jerusalem where the Messiah lived and died and arose in triumph. The Society in London wished to check for a little while the zeal of this young Missionary, until a person of maturer age could accompany him. But to him, delay was like death, and he exclaimed, ‘You might as well tear out my heart.’ He offered to set off as a beggar (which I think he did) with a bundle of Testaments upon his back. He was taken by the Arabs, but treated kindly, and arrived in safety at Mount Zion, to preach the transactions of Mount Calvary, and doubtless to be the instrument, partially at least, of the fulfilment of the prophecy ‘They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn.’ Surely the Sun of Righteousness is about to attain the zenith, and to warm and fructify the whole of our fallen and ruined world.”

He believed, not only that the Jews will be gathered together as a nation, and, as such, become a

spiritual people unto God, but that, *when* thus collected and converted, they will be the principal means, and perhaps the principal messengers, of salvation to the whole world: that being brought home to the fold of Christ, they will fly, impelled by faith and love, into every corner of the earth, and plant triumphantly the banner of the Cross. He thought, moreover, as the conclusion of the foregoing letter evinces, that these times of glory were *rapidly* advancing; "nor is it unlikely," he writes five months later, "that many of the *children* in our congregations may live to see the fulfilment of that sublime prophecy—'A nation shall be born in one day'; may live to see Jew and Gentile kneeling together in the same house of prayer, and remembering the death of the despised and blessed Jesus at the same table."

On the subject of the Millenium, to which he thought the conversion of the Jews would be directly conducive, Mr. Housman's opinions were very decided. In the year 1829, the topic having been previously introduced among the congregation of St. Anne's by his curate, and connected with all sorts of crazy and extravagant fancies, he felt it his duty, though conscientiously disinclined to the discussion of speculative questions, to speak out unreservedly in the face of the people. "The doctrine that Jesus Christ is again coming to dwell visibly upon the earth," he says, "I believe to be entirely unsanctioned by the word of God;"—and having, under the first general head of his discourse, addressed himself to show "that the Scriptures teach, most plainly and positively, that the blessed Saviour will continue at the right hand of God in

heaven, until he shall come, at the last day, to judge the quick and the dead;" and under the second head, "that the Established Church maintains the same truth," (a position to which valuing the Establishment as he did, he attached great importance, and which is supported by extracts from the Three Creeds, and the Collects for the First and Third Sundays in Advent;) he proceeds, in the last division of his sermon, to explain his own ideas of the nature of the Millenium. After citing the ten first verses of the twentieth chapter of the Apocalypse, he contends for a *spiritual* interpretation of the whole of the passage, as more agreeable with the general style of the enigmatical book which contains it, and as less subversive of the undeniable sense of the plain and unfigurative portions of the Bible, than a *literal* interpretation. "Christ," he continues "will be to all men what he is to some men now. He will reign among the nations of the earth, as he now reigns among the churches of the earth; the universal prevalence and ascendancy of the principles of the Gospel, will make whole *countries* of 'faithful men,' as the partial ascendancy and prevalence of those principles now make *companies* of 'faithful men.' Christ will reveal himself to the world, as he now reveals himself to them who are not of the world. There will be an universal rejoicing in his presence, and in the power of his spirit. He will be 'Immanuel,' in different degrees, to all hearts: and repentance, faith, righteousness, peace, purity, and love, will flourish and abound. Grace will triumph then, as nature triumphs now." "We shall not live to witness the glory of the latter day," he elsewhere

says, "but we can ascend upon the Pisgah of the Promises, and behold it steadily advancing. By that faith which is the evidence of things not seen, we can behold Satan bound, and the Lord Jesus reigning triumphantly. We can hear him say to the north 'Give up,' and to the South 'Keep not back. Bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth.' We can behold the dominion of universal righteousness and peace; when man shall cast off his selfishness, and feel for his fellow man; when deceit, and trick, and fraud, shall be known no more; when bars, and bonds, and law, are no longer needed—for principle will be the bar against injustice; and love the bond of security; and the law of God, written in the heart by the Holy Ghost, will make human laws useless. Oh! let us adoringly say, in the language of adoring David, 'Now, therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.'" He corroborates his opinions as to the personal reign of Christ by those of the commentators Scott and Guyse, on which he bestows the approbation of an entire acquiescence. "I have no hesitation," he adds, "in using, in reference to the unscriptural notion of Christ's personal reign upon earth, the strong language of one from whom in the days of my youth I derived advantages of eternal moment; I allude to the venerable and holy Simeon. 'It is,' says that highly honoured servant of God, 'the greatest calamity that ever befell the Church.'" Similar sentiments, no less positively announced, I heard him deliver at Greenfield at the latter end of 1834, on which occasion he said—"One of my chief objections to the theory is, that it leaves Hea-

ven without an Intercessor: and according to the epistle to the Hebrews, there is *always* an intercessor there. Besides, the comparative *smallness* of the number of those who could benefit by the personal abode of the Saviour upon the earth, is of itself fatal to the whole system." This objection, he observed, does not apply to the future enjoyment of Christ in heaven; "for there," he added, "we are told that we shall see him: and we shall be like him—all our powers divinely assimilated to the infinite perfections of his attributes."

"Dec. 11, 1822.

"MY DEAR RICHARD.—*Our E—r* (for I consider her my child as well as your sister) has read to me a part of your last letter to her. It is indeed matter of rejoicing, that the Lord seems to be leading you on to a better world, and not with tardy steps. Besides the *general* promises made to those who call upon the name of the Lord, there is a *particular* promise which belongs, exclusively, perhaps, to those of your years; 'They that seek me early, *shall* find me.' The advantages of early seeking are numerous and immense. Long habits of evil are not then formed. The soul is in its vigour, and can pursue high objects without weariness, except from the common operations of depravity. The mind is free from the suspicion that religion is resorted to merely because the world is receding, and can be enjoyed no longer. And the Lord is peculiarly glorified, when in the full view and prospect of all the allurements and promises of the earth, the youthful heart can say unto the Lord 'Whom have I in heaven but thee?—and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee.'



"It appears however from your letter, that you know 'what sore temptations mean.' There are two scriptures with which you have been harassed; 'For if we sin wilfully,' &c. Heb. x. 26. This scripture evidently refers to determined and final apostasy. See verse 23. 'Let us *hold fast the profession of our faith*,' &c. Here is a warning against apostasy; see verses 28, 29. The Apostle is here referring to the person who *despised* Moses's law; and thence infers the far heavier punishment which would have come upon that unhappy wretch who should *tread under foot* the Son of God, and *count his blood an unholy thing*. Here is a supposition that *contempt* is felt and manifested towards Jesus and his atonement, and that there is a *rejection* of salvation by his blood. For all such 'there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin.' The one great sacrifice is refused, and refused with insult; and there remaineth none besides. Hence destruction is unavoidable.

"This seems most clearly to be the design of the Apostle's reasoning. If the words 'sin wilfully' could possibly be construed as relating to a sin committed by a professor, against knowledge and the remonstrances of conscience (for this is wilful sin) not one soul could possibly be saved; for where is the believer who has not in the absence of the exercise of his principles, and under the power of a pressing temptation, committed, at some time or other, what he *knew* to be contrary to the will of God?

"The suspicion of having committed the sin against the Holy Ghost, is, at some periods of their experience, a heavy trial, perhaps to every one

who will attain the kingdom of heaven. But if I mistake not, the Evangelist St. Mark (Chap. iii. v. 30.) teaches us the *nature* of this sin; 'Because they said "he hath an unclean Spirit."' To ascribe, with *malice* and *enmity*, (for such was the case of the Jews) the operations of the Holy Spirit to the power of the Devil, seems to be the offence alluded to. Perhaps our Lord, in these awful passages, intended to refer to the descent of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. If his enemies, who had rejected all the evidences of his miracles, should reject that last and grandest evidence of his mission, afforded by the plentiful effusion of the Holy Ghost, and should maliciously ascribe the whole to Satanic influence, their case was hopeless. They blasphemed against the Holy Ghost. They would never be renewed unto repentance: they would not be forgiven. An Old Divine very well described the unpardonable sin, by saying 'It is *light* and *spite*.' They who repent and believe the Gospel; yea, they who unfeignedly seek repentance and remission of sins through the blood of Jesus, have the inward witness that, through grace, the unpardonable sin has not been committed by them."

" January 1, 1823.

"My dear E. must never judge of my heart by my hand. The former, I know, can feel; and the latter, I know, is tardy; and what I have to lament is this—that the love of ease seems to be increasing upon me, so that I shall have need of all the charity which the few whom I call my friends can possibly exercise, to shelter me from the suspicion of insensibility, or ingratitude, or unkindness, or I know not what.

[After some remarks upon his correspondent's health, which was interrupted about this time by frequent attacks of excessive pain, Mr. Housman proceeds as follows.]

"But in the midst of my anxious conjectures, I well know that you are in the hands of him who saith, 'I am the Lord who healeth thee.' To his will and covenant love I *would* at least resign you with confidence and comfort. I shall indeed rejoice to hear that it has pleased the Father of mercies to mitigate your sufferings; and if my poor prayers could end them, they would soon be ended.

"I send a few 'crumbs' from the table of St. Anne's, not to 'a sparrow,' which is only of the value of half a farthing; but to a Bird of Paradise, whose worth, in the estimation of unerring judgment, is best learned upon the Mount of Calvary. What a price was there paid for the redemption of my friend! And how immense in importance, with all her feebleness, must she be in the eyes of angels, and of the Lord of Angels! Fear not, my beloved child, 'you are of more value than many sparrows;' and if perpetual ease were good for you, and if that perpetual ease could only be conveyed to you through the creation of another world, that other world would instantly be created.

"We have entered upon another year. The review of the past is indeed humbling. To have been half asleep on the verge of eternity, and to have experienced coldness in the view of redeeming love, should indeed *fix* me in a low room; and with a veil upon my face, when I attempt to look to the Mercy-Seat. It is the aggravation of all sin, that it has been committed *against God*; and it is

the encouragement of a sinner that it *has* been committed against him. No created being, no mercy less than inconceivable and boundless, could have endured the insult."

From a letter dated a fortnight later, and addressed to the same friend, I make two extracts.

"Oh! that Dr. R. may be the honoured instrument of sending you back to Lancaster, if not in robust health, yet enjoying a freedom from pain. And he *will* be this instrument, if a freedom from pain be among the 'all things' which are to work together for your good. But we know not the consequences of any dispensations until the event explains them. But one thing we know (and may this one thing be duly felt and valued) that

'Jehovah's ways, in wise design,  
Are framed upon his throne above,  
And every *dark* or bending line  
Meets in the centre of his love.

'With feeble light, and half obscure,  
Poor mortals his arrangements view,  
Unmindful that the least are sure,  
And the *mysterious* just and true.'

"Or, in the language of the same excellent man and author—

'Though now the storms of sorrow roar,  
And raise of cares a troubled sea,  
Yet, when I land on yonder shore,  
There shall be calm enough for me.  
Why, then, for tempests should I care,  
Since they but drive me sooner there?'

"But it is far easier to quote, or even to write poetry, than to say, in the midst of suffering, and to say it with the whole heart and soul, 'My Father is doing all things well.'"

The next extract refers to some delay which had arisen in the preaching of a particular sermon.

"I have no doubt that it has been *providentially* delayed for some important reason. A poor sparrow cannot fall without divine permission; nor can a sermon, upon Gospel principles, be preached, but at the right time, and to the right persons. I think I have known consequences to result from what some would call accidental circumstances, which fully sustain the truth of this observation. In the divine administration, the difference between what we call little and great occurrences is annihilated. There is nothing *little*; for it is under the control of the Great God, and is leading on to some great event."

"Friday morning, April 22nd, 1823.

"MY DEAR E.—The anxiety which I experienced yesterday concerning the alarming indisposition of your invaluable father, and my long-tried friend, is converted, by the painful accounts of increasing malady, received this morning, into the most unfeigned sorrow. If condolence would benefit either you or yours, that condolence, neither scanty nor cold, is rendered. But alas! there are times when human friendship can do but little, and we are left to grieve at our inability.

"All that I can do, under existing circumstances, is to offer up my *feeble* prayers for all the family, and to remind you of the '*Consolation* of Israel.' The government is upon his shoulders, and a sparrow is not exempted from his providential appointment. The pillars which support his throne are the everlasting and beautiful pillars of Wisdom, Rectitude, Faithfulness, and Love, though some-

times clouds and darkness are round about him. May his choicest comforts visit your dear languishing father, and rest now, and for ever, on the whole family.

“I regret that I am not able to see you all in your sorrows. I hope that not many days will elapse before I shall be able to walk so far. Present to all around you my kindest remembrances and most affectionate sympathy.”

“Saturday evening, 23d April, 1823.

“MY DEAR E.—I thank you for the most interesting communication which you have sent me. To hear that another of the congregation, and that other a most valued friend, has been supported in the dark valley by the faith and hope, and promises of the Gospel, is most cheering, even in the midst of depression. We have indeed occasion to sing of mercy as well as of judgment. The *judgment* is the heavy loss sustained; the *mercy* is the comfortable evidence that we are authorized to look into the eternal world and to view the released spirit, free from sorrow, and sin, and dangers, and swelling the everlasting chorus, ‘Salvation to God and the Lamb.’ What a redemption, and what a Redeemer, are we permitted to contemplate! The former beckons us, by its freeness and fulness, to draw nigh; the latter pledges the whole glory of his name and character that we shall not draw nigh in vain. Oh! the immensity of the mercy of God in Christ! Let us pray to see it ever more and more; to feel it with ever-increasing power; and to become monuments of its triumphs, in sickness, and death, and judgment.

“Present my kindest respects and sincerest sym-

pathy to your valued and afflicted mother. May she have heavenly supports which will more than counterbalance her earthly and heavy trial. To your dear sisters say everything which you *know* I feel for them. May 'the strength of Israel' support *your* feeble frame, and likewise 'strengthen you with strength in your soul.' "

The indisposition alluded to in a previous page was of a very alarming kind. Until the day on which his valued friend whose death is recorded in the foregoing letter was carried to the grave, Mr. Housman had been confined to the house for nine weeks. His complaint at first appeared to be a common fever, but afterwards it assumed a bilious tendency, accompanied by extreme swelling of the legs, and a high degree of inflammation. He was in imminent danger; and had it not been for the considerate attention of his congregation, who, when a more generous mode of living became necessary, promptly supplied him with the means of ensuring it he must inevitably have sunk beneath the debilitating effects of his disease. 'I cannot tell you,' says Mrs. Housman, writing to one of her children, 'how kind our friends have been on this occasion. One day your dear father received, anonymously, two presents, of £3 and a £5 note—for the purpose, we conclude, of obtaining good medical advice; and Port, Madeira, and Sherry have been sent us as freely as if they were of no more value than water. Could he have taken a gallon a day, it would, I am sure, have been plentifully provided. Indeed, wine has come in such quantities that we might have stocked our cellar. had we felt disposed to do so. In how different a

manner are the ministers of the Gospel treated now to what they were when prisons, stripes, and martyrdom, were their recompense !'

"April 27th, 1823.

"MY DEAR E—R.—I am sincerely sorry that your domestic affliction should be accompanied by internal darkness. But no new thing has happened unto you. I well remember, that under a bereavement of the severest nature, I was left, for weeks and months, under a soul-distress, approaching almost, if not altogether, to despair. The enemy was permitted to come in like a flood, and I was everything but overwhelmed. But better days succeeded ; and bright prospects are reserved, (and I trust at an early period) for my dear friend.

"But the question arises—What is now to be done ? I answer ; Do not perplex yourself with endeavouring to ascertain what has been the depth, or even the reality, of your former experience. From such investigations, in moments of gloom—perplexity and tumult, instead of light and comfort, will frequently arise. *Begin this day as if you had never begun before.* Look, not at the *promises*, for the enemy may suggest a doubt whether they belong to you ; but look at the *invitations* and *encouragements*, which *do* belong to you, because they are addressed to "every creature" where the Gospel comes. View the gracious nature and character of the Lord, in Ezekiel xxxiii. 11. 2 Tim. ii. 21. Rev. xxii. 17. Micah vii. 18. 2 Cor. v. 20, 21. Look at these Scriptures again and again, praying for the Spirit's light that you may see the adorable willingness and delight of the Lord to save and bless all who are willing to be saved and blessed,



through the redemption of Jesus. These views, which the Scriptures warrant and command, will beat down unbelief; will humble you under the recollection that such a God in Christ has ever and often been forgotten; will lead your soul to flee, with cheerfulness and alacrity, to Jesus for refuge; and will excite afresh your love to that Saviour who 'loved you and gave himself for you.' These simple directions will, I doubt not, under the divine blessing, bring you again into peace.

"I regret that circumstances prevent you from coming up to Greenfield, and that my continued lameness prevents me from walking down to see you. In an interview, statements can be made, and objections answered, which cannot be done in a short and hasty note. May the Lord revive, sanctify and bless you."

" September 24, 1823.

"I have been too long and too well acquainted with my dear E—r, not to be quite certain that the usual token of affectionate remembrance will be cordially welcomed by her. It is one great comfort attendant on a friendship founded on Christian principles, that we have not to look at our friend through a veil, and that often nearly impenetrable. There is nothing sinister, nothing which needs and courts concealment. All this simulation and dissimulation belongs only to the intercourse of a 'world lying in wickedness.' WITHOUT GUILE is the inscription written upon a Christian heart. We can therefore, after some confidential acquaintance, know with very considerable accuracy how the few whom we really love will feel towards us, under almost every possible variety of circumstance and situation.

“As my dear E—r’s *friend*, and possessing perhaps some portion of what is called sensibility, I am disposed to mourn that you are in pain, and that you are interdicted for a considerable time from all activity. As a *Christian* friend, I doubtless ought rather to rejoice. The Redeemer, who loved you and gave himself for you, has seen it right to shelter you in the valley, from many a storm which might have beaten upon you. We know but little what an awful bearing perpetual ease and health and sunshine might have upon our everlasting destiny. The joys of the world, as well as the sorrows of the world, might work death, even death eternal. Fear not; you are of more value than all the material universe which God has created. Your soul is to survive the wreck of matter; your soul, therefore, is a higher object to him who died for you, than the stupendous fabric which he is upholding by the word of his power. He will therefore plan for you with *all* his wisdom, and with *all* the depths and heights of his love; and if, in the execution of his plans of wonder and grace, he sees it necessary to place you in the furnace, you know, and at seasons you will feel and say ‘My Father, God, is doing all things well.’ Remember, my very dear child, that the Saviour himself was made perfect through sufferings; and that all who hereafter will see him as he is, must, in some measure, while in this world, be led through a similar dark avenue to the world of light. If *he* trod a thorny path, let not *us* dream of a path of roses. My dear E—r has a title, and she knows that she has a title to ‘a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory:’ and though I must feel,

yet I dare not repine, if she proceeds to her inheritance by a few steps of sorrow.

From a letter written in the same year I take the following passage, in which "LOOKING UNTO JESUS," by Isaac Ambrose, a work of which he was a great admirer is strongly recommended.

"I hope you took Ambrose with you to be one of your travelling companions. When the heart is renewed, there is in every case a thirst for holiness; but we do not so soon see *the way of attaining the blessing*, to any large extent. Holiness has for its basis the love of God in Christ; or rather, this love forms its very essence. And this love is attained in exact proportion as the object of love is discovered. Ambrose, by developing the character, grace, and offices of the Redeemer with so much minuteness, helps forward, through the divine blessing, our acquaintance with him. In the knowledge of him standeth our eternal life; and in the increasing knowledge consisteth our advancement in every holy affection. I recommend my dear Mary to read Ambrose upon her knees; for Ambrose, and even the Bible, can only be to us what the Lord makes them to be. But the Lord has engaged to give his Holy Spirit *to them that ask him*."

"Saturday, half-past 11.

"'Are you sick, or are you surly?' was a question which Dr. Johnson asked his friend Boswell, who had omitted to write to him for some time. Will my dear E—r put the same question to me, or shall I put it to E—r? Have we been standing upon etiquette? Who should have broken silence? Perhaps the point cannot be easily ascertained; there may be conflicting reasons. What are they?

“You are *a lady*, and, as such, may be standing on your peculiar privileges. I am *an old man*, and may plead ‘Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head.’ But without attempting to settle the important difficulty, I will show my magnanimity and begin first. And now, my dear E—r, let me ask you—how is your health, mental and bodily? In both I feel an interest. The latter, sooner or later, must give way; the former can wax stronger and stronger. Our natural powers acquire vigour by persevering exercise; and there is something analogous to this in the Lord’s method of communicating his grace. He blesses the diligent soul; he suffers the slothful to feel the mortification and the disgrace of crying out, ‘My leanness, my leanness.’ I believe, my dear child, that he has not only called you with a holy calling, but that he has girt you up with a steady resolution to seek, without wavering, for glory, and honour, and immortality. Go forward, rejoicing in your title, your privileges, and your prospects. Your title is high—a *child of God*. Your privileges are immense—*communion, through meditation and prayer, with the blessed Trinity*. Your prospects are nothing less than *a perfect likeness to your Redeemer, and an everlasting nearness to the Throne of Love*.

“If you have not yet seen the Life of Mr. Scott, there is a high treat in reserve for you. In going through the volume, every step seems to be on holy ground.

“Farewell, my dear E—r. I am stealing time from to-morrow’s sermon; and I must not increase the theft. But it is always a sacred duty with me to fulfil, if possible, every intimation I have given;

and I said last week that you should hear from me to-day."

The following letter, addressed to his daughter Elizabeth, now Mrs. Prichard, is presented to the public under interesting circumstances. A few months ago, Mr. Prichard's house at Woodside, near Liverpool, a new and handsome residence, caught fire, and, an exceedingly high wind raging at the time, was destroyed in less than two hours. Mrs. Prichard, having provided for the safety of her children, rushed into the dining-room to secure the admirable portrait of her father by Lonsdale—that from which the beautiful engraving at the beginning of this volume is taken. Her heroic tenderness was rewarded with success; tearing the valued relic from the wall, she bore it uninjured in her arms to a considerable distance from her desolated home. Her next attempt was to possess herself of a small bundle of Mr. Housman's letters that lay in a casket up stairs; the fire, however, had increased to so alarming an extent as to render the accomplishment of her purpose impossible, and immediately afterwards the roof fell in. Among the papers destroyed, were several most interesting communications from Mr. Housman's pen, which Mrs. Prichard had been arranging for my use the previous day. The original of the subjoined letter, of which a copy had fortunately, perhaps providentially, been made some years before, perished in the flames.

"MY DEAREST ELIZABETH.—I felt thankful when a gracious providence had conducted you in safety to Tarvin, and I felt gratified at your punctuality in writing. Dr. Johnson observes that 'we can

only have our parents once.' Whenever your parents are removed, both you and Agnes may remember with satisfaction that you very much contributed to the comfort of our declining years. My heart's desire and prayer to God for both of you is this—that you may walk before him as a reconciled Father through Christ Jesus, and find your happiness in the manifested light of his countenance, and then be admitted to dwell with him in his everlasting kingdom.

"This world is vanity and worse than vanity; it is full of snares, and dangers, and disappointments, and sorrows. It is not God. It cannot bestow redemption to a single soul; it is unable to give a hope full of immortality; it deceives, and the love of it destroys all real comfort; and if the love of it be persevered in, it will destroy with a sore destruction. Arise, then, my dearest child, through the power of supplicated grace, far above its polluted and perilous atmosphere. Set your affections on things above; and, to this end, read your Bible, and be often in prayer.

"In the Bible the Lord himself speaks to you words whereby you may be saved; and be very mindful, whenever you read the Scriptures, to read them with prayer for the light and teaching of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit reveals no new truths; he opens the understanding to behold the importance and excellence of what is already revealed; and when the importance and excellence are discovered by his sacred light, they are felt with power upon the heart. When, therefore, you are about to open your Bible, let the supplication arise unto the Lord, 'O Lord, send out thy light and thy

truth. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.' You will then read with profit, with comfort, and with salvation.

"Be often in prayer. The object of all prayer is God; but it has pleased him to reveal himself in the human nature of Jesus. So says the Saviour; 'The Father dwelleth in me,' and 'He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.' Whether, therefore, we address the Father through the mediation of the Son, or whether we address the Son immediately and directly, or whether we address the Holy Spirit, we address THE ONE GRACIOUS GOD, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as dwelling in the humanity of Jesus, as in a temple. This view of God, in and through Jesus Christ, should inspire us with hope and confidence, notwithstanding our sins and defilements, for we are speaking to him, who, when he sojourned on the earth in a body of flesh, never cast out *one* sincere supplication; he *always* filled the hungry with good things; and he is the same yesterday, to-day, and forever.

"The subjects of prayer are many, but the three following you must always keep in remembrance. Pray for such a view of sin, inward and outward, as will habitually scatter all carelessness in the great concern of salvation, and keep you humbled and abased before an often neglected God. Pray for the Holy Spirit to show you the glory, and grace, and redemption of the Saviour, that your heart may be fixing its *sole* reliance for mercy on the atoning blood which was shed at Calvary for *your* sins. Pray for such a scriptural hope and assurance that Jesus *has* cleansed you from all your sins, that your soul may ascend unto him in the

exercise of love and gratitude, and that you may seek to honour him in thought, word, and deed.

"These few directions, my dear child, I would endeavour to give you, if I knew I were to die the next hour. I ask not for my children riches or honours; I ask not worldly distinctions of any kind; but I *do* ask for them the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost."

Four years previously, in a letter to another correspondent, he had thus written.

"I conjure you, as you value the *growth* of spiritual grace; nay, as you value the very *existence* of spiritual grace; be diligent in the work of secret meditation and prayer. Oh! be *much* in this work, and be earnest in it. Study to be *serious* in the most serious of all concerns—the concern of your eternal soul. Converse with your own heart, and converse *faithfully* with it. Examine its movements and dispositions. Hear what report it brings in concerning your state before God. Come, if you can, to a thorough acquaintance with your condition and your prospects for another world: and that you may press on in the solemn business of self-examination, and bring it to a saving effect, retire *often* from the cares and the bustle and the company of the world, and let your society at these times be none but your conscience and your God. Continued meditation, honestly pursued, and *patiently* persisted in, will lead to very important discoveries of ruin and redemption. These discoveries will be accompanied by prayer; and the distance between prayer and thanksgiving, between humbly kneeling at the throne of grace,



and a joyful station before the throne in glory, is not great. They who pray, with the spirit and the understanding, are in the way to receive all the promises and all the consolations of God. They who do *not* pray, have not one promise directed to *them*, and cannot receive one consolation from the Comforter. Many are the marks which form the boundary line between the redeemed Church of Christ and the world which lieth in wickedness—between the children of God and the children of the Devil;—but there is no mark of separation more distinct and decisive, than ‘*the fervent prayer of the heart.*’”

And nearly about the same time;—

“Let me affectionately warn you against relaxing in the habit of secret prayer. Here the tremendous evil and ruin of withdrawing from God generally begins. I have known multiplied instances, not only of backsliding but of apostasy, and the first fault was always *here*. First *omission*, and then *commission*. The omission of duty leads infallibly to the commission of sin. Beware how you permit the most imperative engagements to interfere with the sacred time which you may have prescribed for purposes of retirement and supplication; there can be *no* engagements so imperative as those of eternity. Oh! beware of neglecting *once* what should never be neglected *at all*. The transition from neglect to desolation is an easy one. Interrupted prayer becomes cold and lifeless prayer; and being cold and lifeless, it is first disrelished and then laid aside. What follows? The channel of communication between heaven and earth is cut off, and the heart is left to the poison of its own

selfishness and sin. 'A prayerless person,' says an old divine, 'is a Christless and graceless person.' Secret prayer is the power of Christian life. It is like the strong lock of Sampson. Oh! let every day be a day of supplication, a day of pressing forward, a day in which the Lord's salvation is either solidly enjoyed or vigorously sought; a day of great things, if the Lord will; or such a day of small things as the Lord will not despise."

And again;—

"Be careful to avoid, in the day, what will hinder prayer in the evening. The common operations of depravity, if resisted, will not prevent you from meeting God with confidence, to ask his mercy and his grace. But sin—any one sin, however small—wilfully or heedlessly ventured on, will raise up, perhaps for days, perhaps for weeks, a wall of separation between you and your God. You will be afraid to come nigh to him; and he will refuse to draw nigh to you."

He was urgent too in recommending ejaculatory prayer. Nothing tends more to keep alive the sense of the omnipresence, omniscience, and omnipotence of the Deity; and to one who has "received the atonement" and "put on Christ," these sublime attributes, otherwise fraught with terror and discomfort, are the foundation not only of reverence and awe the most profound, but of the sweetest and richest peace.

"Be darting up to heaven," he says, "short supplications throughout the course of every day. Short prayers take long flights. They go to the Mercy-Seat, and are prevailing presented to God by the divine Intercessor. Does a thought of sin,

or of Jesus, or of your perishing fellow-sinners, or of the Church of God, arise, through the Spirit's grace, within you? Improve the thought. Let it lead you to a prayer. Let God, if I may so speak, be your confidant. This habit of constant discoursing with him who is invisible, shows a mind already spiritual, and makes it more so."

In speaking of "small sins," Mr. Housman must not be mistaken. The expression, as used in the third of the foregoing extracts, has a relative or comparative signification. Absolutely, there are *no* small sins. They only *seem* small; and they seem so, just because our blindness hinders us from seeing more than a small part of them. What appears to us the smallest sin, has the vital principle of the greatest sin within it, and is susceptible of indefinite enlargement. The very least sin, if beheld by the light of the infinite holiness and infinite purity of God, would be found to be infinitely evil. Hence the propriety of Mr. Housman's frequent prayer—"Show me thy glory."

From a letter to the Rev. Thomas Burrow, at that time an under-graduate of Cambridge, the subjoined extract is taken. Having mentioned, in connexion with advice and counsel, three or four of the most fatal dangers incident to a college life, Mr. Housman thus proceeds to caution his correspondent.

"I apprehend that your greatest danger will be in something of the following description. You are of studious habits; you have formed the determination, and most laudably formed it, to stand high in your college, and high in the Senate-House. You may rise in the morning to pursue your

studies; and, from the ardour proceeding from a desire of eminence, you may curtail the time which ought to be devoted to the word of God and prayer. Then all may go wrong—for the Lord will be displeased. I recollect that your late Tutor (Mr. W. Higgin) informed me that when he neglected his Bible in the morning, nothing prospered; but when he sought and served the Lord after he had risen from sleep, a peculiar blessing seemed to come, not only upon his soul, but upon his subsequent studies. \* \* \* \* If anything more occurred to me, as likely to occasion danger to your best interests, I would mention it. But nothing strikes me at present, except it be the danger which all are in, of making undue compliances with the world and its customs. It requires wisdom from above to know what are *undue* compliances; but attention to the direction, 'Let him ask of God' will draw down the blessing."

In these passages Mr. Housman gave advice which his own practice had long exemplified. Few men were more methodical in the distribution of their time, and perhaps none have more exclusively devoted the best portions of it to their God. Until within twelve months of his death, his daily custom for upwards of half a century had been to rise at six in the morning in summer, and at seven in winter, and to consecrate the two succeeding hours to engagements of prayer, meditation, and sacred reading. "The heart," he used to say, "should never go into the world till it has been in heaven first." From this habit he did not allow even illness to divert him; and it may be recorded as a somewhat remarkable fact, that though repeatedly

attacked by alarming indisposition, and constitutionally subject to excruciating head-aches, (there was scarcely a day in which he did not suffer from these distressing pains) the economical arrangement of his plans, during a space of nearly thirty years, to which the experience of my informant is limited, was certainly not interrupted more than half a dozen times in a year. Breakfast was preceded by family worship, which he designated, in the language of Philip Henry, "a hem to all other business, to keep it from ravelling." The service commenced with the reading of a clause or two in the Devotional Testament of the Rev. Richard Marks, accompanied by the practical "Reflections" contained in that work.\* Mr. Housman would occasionally introduce observations of his own, by way of paraphrase or exposition; but he more frequently restricted himself to the simple words of Scripture, and the remarks of the commentator. The prayer which followed was extempore, and usually corresponded with the passage he had been considering; it was characterized by energetic simplicity of language, by great solemnity of thought, and by a peculiarly impressive earnestness of manner. Breakfast over, the family withdrew, and he resumed his congenial employment of study, self-examination, and prayer.

His whole life indeed (to use the words of Scougal) "was a kind of prayer, a constant course of communion with God. If the sacrifice was not always offering, yet was the fire still kept alive." And herein lay the secret alike of his extraordinary

\* I speak of the latter years of his life; formerly he used Scott's Commentary.

ministerial success and of his distinguished personal piety. "Spending, as he did for many years," says Mr. Statler, "the greater part of every day in private meditation and prayer; in realizing and adoring contemplations of the love of God in Christ Jesus; he came forth from his retirement, his heart and mind deeply imbued, and, if I may so speak, impressed and stamped with heaven. Hence, in his whole demeanour there was a holiness and spirituality, and in his conversation an unction and a savour, which few, even eminent Christians, attain to." And again. "Mr. Housman was a man of *much* prayer. He spent many hours of every day, for many years, with God. Hence he was full of the Holy Ghost, and therefore so eminently 'a good man' and 'full of faith;' and thus replenished, and thus blessed from above, by his instrumentality much people was added unto the Lord."

In the evening, at eight o'clock precisely, the family were again summoned to his room, and a course of worship similar in order to that of the morning, but appropriately deepened in solemnity, was conducted by the venerable master of the house. I have heard few prayers more beautiful or more affecting than these his evening addresses. They were full of the spirit of grace and of supplication; calm, earnest, devout, scripturally sententious and weighty, and singularly expressive of profoundest affiance in the kindness of the great Being at whose footstool he was kneeling. This the predominant characteristic of his prayers, was, however, free from any intermixture of presumptuous familiarity. He spoke, in the view of Eternity and eternal things, and the

boldness with which he approached the Mercy-Seat was accordingly coupled with awe. He never forgot that though he sought the pardon and presence of a Father, it was a Father *who is in Heaven*.

The following note, addressed to an affectionate member of his congregation, touchingly records the death of his admirable daughter, Mrs. Gathorne. She died, full of joy and faith, at Tarvin, on the 28th of July, 1825, after an illness of only forty-eight hours' duration.

“ Sunday Afternoon.

“ MY DEAR E.—I thank you for your kind note. My darling Jane is enjoying a Sabbath indeed! Hers indeed was the abundant entrance. Under excessive debility she was enabled to utter, ‘Whom thou hast redeemed with thy *precious, most precious* blood’—‘numbered with thy saints in glory everlasting—glory everlasting.’ But after such a life of diligence and spirituality as hers has been, I wonder not that she declared that she was ‘happy.’ Oh! that all my children, accompanied by their father and mother, were this day where my Jane is! But the Lord’s hand is not shortened. May not a hoof be left behind.”\*

The letter which follows, evinces Mr. Housman’s feelings upon a subject which moved them strongly. Free from every particle of ostentation himself,

\* Many years prior to the date of this affecting note, Mrs. Housman, then on a visit to the same beloved daughter at Lutterworth, thus mentions her in a letter to one of her most valued friends. “It is a great mercy to be delivered from all distressing apprehensions respecting the everlasting condition of one so dear as a first-born child. I have no doubt that an eternal weight of glory will be the portion of my Jane, whenever the Lord shall call her hence. Thanks be to God for this his unspeakable mercy.”

he had a profound aversion to clamorous and obtrusive professors, and shrank, with a sort of instinctive recoil, from the contagion of their society. Extraordinary impartations of divine favour may be asserted by any one; but genuine humility, the *necessary* fruit of a genuine faith, is far from being easily counterfeited. Men who are *not* humble soon grow tired of appearing so. "I can speak from long and close observation," he remarks, a few years prior to the date of the subjoined, "and I can say, that to the best of my recollection, I never knew a professor turn out well, who did not give evidence of real humiliation of heart, whatever he might boast of assurance and of comfort." And in 1834 (Sep. 21,) he thus advises on the same subject; "Be satisfied with no hope, with no confidence, with no supposed experience, that is not accompanied with real poverty of spirit, with self-condemnation for having dishonoured God, and with self-aborrence for your disobedience, ingratitude, and rebellion. The Publican's posture of soul is the becoming and the safe posture for every sinner; and the Publican's prayer, if felt upon the heart, will ever find its way, through the intercession of Jesus, to the heart of Him who has published this to be his will—'Every one that humbleth himself shall be exalted.'"

"Lancaster, Jan. 31, 1826.

"MY DEAR RICHARD,—Instead of a letter you must only have a note, and that a short one. I have just finished a long letter on some important business, which required calculations; my head feels the effect, and I cannot delay the frank until tomorrow.



"I saw dear E. this afternoon. It appears to me that the earthly tabernacle is in nearly the same state as when you left Lancaster. Certainly, to my apprehension, not worse. But the immortal tenant within seems to 'wax stronger and stronger.' When the time comes, she will have an 'abundant entrance,' if I do not greatly mistake. I have almost universally observed, that as humble, cautious, doubting, but conscientious believers, approach nearer and nearer the end of their pilgrimage, they acquire renewed strength; a sweeter savour of heavenly things; a fuller assurance that all is safe, and that all before them is glory. On the other hand, noisy and confident professors often lose their confidence when it is most wanted; and remind one of the lamentations of the foolish Virgins—'Our lamps are gone out.' He that walketh humbly, walketh surely.

"Mr. Newton used to say—there was 'country grace' and 'London grace.' Do you perceive any difference? I believe that London abounds with temptations, more in number, and perhaps fiercer in their onset, than temptations in the country. But it may be that the difference is annihilated when the promise 'My grace is sufficient for thee' is realized in its truth, and rested on in the simplicity of earnest prayer. If the form of him who walketh with us be like the son of God, a burning fiery furnace cannot touch a hair of our heads; but if his grace be not implored, the stillness of a summer's evening may even overthrow us. To that grace I would commend my young friend. Pray much, and cleave unto the Lord Christ with purpose of heart—and to live will be Christ, and to die will be gain."

Commensurate with his antipathy to spiritual pride and mock humility, was the condescending gentleness with which he encouraged the smallest beginnings of religion, if but sincere. How fondly he cherished the *lambs* of his flock, and tempered to them the cold wind, let those say, and there are numbers, who have experienced his pastoral care, and the graciousness of his tender love, in seasons when love and care were needed most. Knowing as he did that the ordinary operations of the Spirit of God upon the spirit of man are gradual, and that the vast work of salvation, analogously to the whole course and economy of nature, is progressive, the slightest indication of an inner change, the *least* trait of Christ's image, excited at once his interest, his energies, and his hope. He was one of the last men in the world to despise the day of small things. "In the divine administration there is nothing *little*; for it is under the control of the Great God, and is leading on to some great event." This conviction, and it was habitual, helped to promote, not only the spiritual advancement of others, but his own; for whilst *they* were benefited by the zealous vigilance it suggested in their pastor, the sources of philanthropic sympathy were enlarged, and deepened, and multiplied, in *him*. These are advantages that would not so readily have resulted from a belief in immediate and completed transformations of the moral being.

On the subject of Christian Perfection, Mr. Housman's opinions may easily be inferred. The doctrine of absolute and sinless perfection he peremptorily rejected as altogether groundless; and the fact that it is invariably thus rejected, (either ex-

pressly by words, or indirectly, though not the less surely, by the testimony of uniform humiliation of soul) by all who approximate most nearly to its brightness, presents the strongest possible refutation of its arrogant and vain pretensions. The holiest of men are the readiest to acknowledge that the activities of sin are interminable, and that opposition to sin must be unceasing; but this concession, so far from discouraging hope, or paralyzing exertion, contributes to renewed and prevailing efforts in the race and warfare of Christian experience. The most perfected in holiness will ever be found to be the most diligent in perfecting holiness. The beat, bent, and bias of a soul that hath tasted the blessedness of the grace and peace of God, is after more. The possession of the unsearchable riches of Christ, begets, "an avarice of spiritual things," and covetous desires that are insatiable. One whom the Father "draws," cannot stand still. Christianity knows no Bowers of Idleness. Its attainments are successively productive of fresh attainments; its consequences become causes; its triumphs ensure new conquests; glory conducts to glory, and strength to strength. Looking unto Jesus, however much of conscious happiness it supposes, implies an unreached distance, an excellence ungained, untouched and untrodden eminences of light and love. "The purification or sanctification of the soul," says Mr. Housman, "is a progressive work. It begins with a *fear* of sin; it proceeds to a *hatred* of sin. It begins by renouncing sin *in the life*; it proceeds to a mortification of sin *in the heart*. It begins by abstaining from iniquity, through a sense of its danger; it proceeds to abstain

from it, through a regard to the will and glory of the Lord. It begins in approving and receiving the Saviour because he is a *needed* Saviour; it proceeds to love him, and honour him, and obey him, because he is experienced to be kind, and gracious, and faithful, and altogether lovely. It begins with a spiritual thirst for the new heart and the right spirit; it proceeds to regard the Lord supremely, and to say, in the true temper of adoption and grace—‘Hallowed be thy name; thy kingdom come.’ These, I believe, are the outlines of real purification. The *complete* conformity of the Christian to his Lord, will not be possessed till the general resurrection. One of the Reformers, Beza, in reference to 1 John iii. 3, observes—‘The apostle does not say *has* purified, but *purifieth* himself; that we may understand him to signify *following after* holiness, not the perfect attainment of it.’ We shall be *like* him;—when? When he shall *appear*.” And in one of his published sermons, having maintained, on the authority of Scripture, the universality and ineradicableness of human corruption, he thus proceeds:—“To those present, if any such there be, who imagine themselves free from all sin, I would recommend the prayer of Moses, ‘I beseech thee, show me thy glory.’ If you had a thousandth part of such a discovery of the Lord’s infinite and everlasting excellence as he could give you, your dream of perfection would be scattered in a moment. Like the Apostle, in the Isle of Patmos, you would fall at his feet as dead; or, if you *could* utter a sentence, that sentence would be ‘God be merciful to me a sinner.’” Under the privilege of *extraordinary* discoveries

of the divine glory, precisely such was the habitual sentiment, and precisely such the frequent exclamation of Mr. Housman himself. "In retiring from my present situation," he writes, in reference to his resignation of St. Anne's, "I would retire with the Publican's prayer on my lips and in my heart:"—and not many days before his happy translation to the world of spirits, "I would go there," he said, "with 'God be merciful to me a sinner' mingling with my praises." To use his own beautiful language on another occasion—"Through every stage and step of life he was clothed with humility; and as he advanced into the valley of the shadow of death, he wrapt the garment still closer round him."

To one of the oldest and most affectionate of his friends he addressed the following letter, in a season of great affliction to his correspondent.

"MY DEAR SIR.—I feel considerable anxiety respecting Jane, and I should be much obliged if you or A. would have the goodness to inform me whether the attack upon the chest, and all other unpleasant symptoms are abated. I unfeignedly sympathize with you and the family, and I would gladly trust that the cause of alarm and anguish to your hearts, has subsided. I would pray that the dear invalid may have faith to realize the Saviour's truth and grace in that invitation of his mercy, 'Look unto me and be ye saved, *all the ends of the earth* ; for I am God and there is none else.' (Isaiah xlv. 22.) There is no exception of persons. All are welcome to look and apply, to whom the rich invitation is welcome. The record is no less encouraging than this—'Let him that is athirst

come; and whosoever *will*.' Pray give my love to Jane, and tell her that if she and I had a ten thousandth part of the impression of the Redeemer's mercy which we ought to feel when we are told that he died on a cross for rebellious sinners, the effects would be deep humiliation, combined with a strong and triumphant faith, and fervent love, and adoring thankfulness, and 'a desire to depart, and to be with Christ.' Prayer, fervent and persevering prayer, for the Holy Spirit's light and power, will give us something both of the impression and the affections."

The expected blow was delayed. Two years later, Mr. Housman addressed to his friend the following letter. Shortly after the receipt of this very beautiful communication, the spirit of the beloved daughter so affectionately commemorated by it, passed into the skies.

"Greenfield, November 5, 1829.

"MY DEAR SIR.—I have purposed, for some time, to express my sincere condolence for your heavy trial in the increasing weakness of dear Jane. I am a parent, and well know a parent's feelings. But your cup of sorrow, I have learnt within these last few days, has been delightfully mingled with sweet consolation, arising from the peaceful and comfortable state of your child's mind. Nature will feel, and ought to feel, or there could be no such thing as an experience of resignation to the divine will. A stone can feel nothing. It is when props are failing; when the objects on which acute affection was leaning are giving way; when prospects of continued communion with our dear families are obscured; it is in these seasons of sorrow, and when

the heart is bleeding, that our principles are put to the test; and happy do we find ourselves, when from a thorough conviction of the Lord's unerring righteousness and tender mercy, we are enabled to say *from the heart*, 'Thy will be done.' You, my dear Sir, were called upon, under a former dispensation, to sing of mercy as well as of judgment. You lost your Mary—but it was a loss which any Christian parent might be thankful to endure. She left a bright evidence in the dark valley that all was well with her soul. She was then removed from a world of danger and sorrow to a world where the Lamb that is in the midst of the Throne "shall feed his redeemed, and lead them unto living fountains of waters, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes." Your dear Jane may soon be called to join the blessed company. Be it so—and let the Redeemer's name be magnified. You may have to tread the remaining part of your pilgrimage, uncheered by the affectionate society of your child; but not uncheered by the thought that she is rejoicing in a mansion in her Father's house above, safe from every harm, and snare, and fear—and receiving from her Saviour's abounding loving-kindness the fulness of her joy. Thanks be unto our redeeming God for appointing to all who seek him, that 'as the affliction aboundeth, the consolation aboundeth much more.'

"Will you have the goodness to present my affectionate remembrances to dear Jane, and tell her my request is this—that she would dwell, in her meditations, very especially on two points; first, that Jesus, by the grace of God, tasted death for every one, (Hebrews ii. 9;) and secondly, that they

who *receive* him with the soul's consent, approbation and reliance, are the children of God. (John i. 12. Gal. iii. 26.) The more we are established in the steady realizing belief of these two indisputable truths, our application to the Saviour becomes comfortable and habitual; our peace is confirmed; our hope enters within the veil; our love to the Redeemer, and to his people, and to all mankind, becomes a purifying principle; and we obtain a meetness for a better world."

The "Mary" mentioned in this interesting letter, obtained her immortality in the beginning of the year 1825. Mr. Housman has referred to her removal in these terms:

"She had in some degree tried the world; and she found it vanity, vexation and wormwood. She tried the religion of Jesus; and she found *that* to be life, and substance, and peace, and consolation. In the season of her health she sought the Lord; and in the time of her sickness the Lord was nigh, with his presence and blessing. On the day but one preceding her removal, she had such a deep view of the unspotted purity of God, that her hope was staggered; and under a similar view, the hope of the prophet Isaiah was staggered likewise—for even *he* cried out, 'Woe is me, I am undone.' But from the mind of our young friend the cloud of trembling and fear was soon scattered, and the day of her departure was a day of faith, of triumph, and of joy. Speaking of the numbers which she believed *had* gone to glory, and *would* go to glory, from the congregation of St. Anne's, she exclaimed, with a cheerful confidence, 'I am sure *I* shall rise up to swell the chorus. Oh! what a blessed eternity



shall we spend together ! Jesus is every moment more and more precious. Jesus has been kind from first to last. Much more, to the same joyful effect, did this dying child of God pour forth from her grateful and redeemed soul ; and much she declared she had to say. But utterance failed ; she had finished her appointed testimony ; glorified the Lord in the fires ; and she was taken from the work of praise on earth, to the delight of praise in glory."

Although, in compliance with a very strongly entertained conviction of its utter incompatibility with the pastoral office, Mr. Housman had invariably refrained from any personal interference in the party-politics of the day, there were probably few men who took more interest in the great national questions that engaged public attention and divided public opinion from time to time. He had watched, with profound concern, the progress of the sacred efforts of his friend Mr. Wilberforce, in the cause of the abolition of the Slave Trade ; and when at length, after repeated defects and accumulated discouragements, those unceasing efforts were crowned with success, he rejoiced, with the rejoicing of a man and a Christian, at the glorious and triumphant issue. In later years, the public measures that most powerfully moved him, were the repeal of the Test and Corporation Act, the removal of the Catholic Disabilities, and the amendment of the Poor Laws. On the subject of the Parliamentary Reform Bill he felt but slightly. The two former, more directly connected as they were with the moral and religious circumstances of the country, demanded and received his deliberate consideration ; and after maturely balancing

the various arguments respectively advanced by their advocates and opponents, his judgment was given in favour of both those influential reformations. Party-feeling ran high in Lancaster in 1828 and '29. Petitions from the Corporation, the Town, and the Clergy, were severally prepared and forwarded to Parliament against the Emancipation Bill; and Mr. Housman was twice formally waited on by one of his clerical brethren, and more than twice assailed by the obtrusive importunities of an indefatigable layman, with a view to obtain his co-operation in their active and by no means pacific opposition to the claims of their Roman Catholic fellow-subjects. He was inflexible. The logic and eloquence usually adopted on such occasions were vehemently applied, but without effect. He could not be made to see either that the Church was in danger, or that political concessions involved religious apostasy. He was too good a Protestant to dread Popery, and too thoroughly imbued with the spirit of the Gospel to persecute it. On principles of Christian justice he had reasoned, and in the result of his reasoning he confidently rested. "My views on the matter," (his sentiments were thus recorded in the year 1828, in communicating with a highly respectable member of the Society of Friends,) "have undergone a change of late. However *we* may be right, and the Catholics wrong, the religion of Jesus Christ, I am convinced, cannot be understood to sanction the use of coercive measures for bringing others to think as we think; and most assuredly we have no ground for supposing, from any experience we have had, that the use of such measures will ever be successful. In-

deed, the idea of coercing other men's thoughts, is, in itself, when plainly expressed, a glaring absurdity."

That his liberal sentiments on these great questions are consistent with the abstract principle on which an Established Church is erected, (supposing, as such principle does, the right and obligation of giving law to opinion) I am far from being prepared to say. They are, however, and this is infinitely better, agreeable to the mild and merciful and self-denying genius of Christianity, the divine origin and vital energies of which are seldom more triumphantly attested than when exhibited in victorious conflict with cunningly devised and formidable systems of human policy.\*

To one of his nieces, from whom a lovely child had been suddenly snatched away by death, Mr. Housman addressed the following letter of condolence.

"Greenfield, May 13, 1833.

"MY DEAR S— A—.—The hand of the Lord hath touched you. You feel: and if there were no feeling there could be no resignation. Dr. Young has beautifully and forcibly said

‘Amidst my list of blessings infinite,

This stands the foremost, that my heart has bled.’

"You mourn the stroke which has laid a darling child in the dust. But repress your sorrow; or rather, take your sorrow, in the exercise of humble prayer, to the footstool of eternal mercy, and beg of God, for the sake of his dear Son, that he would

\* Mr. Housman's general politics were those of the Pitt school. He had high notions of government, and low notions of popular rights. He carried the theory of subordination little short of passive obedience.

sanctify to you the painful dispensation. Your prayer, if believing and persevering, will be heard and answered. You will be led to see and to know that a heavenly Father's hand had mingled the bitter cup which he called you to drink, and mingled it with much loving-kindness—with loving-kindness to your child and to yourself. *She* is removed from a world of sin, and disappointment, and sorrow, both mental and bodily, and full of snares and dangers to the immortal soul. Tender was the love, and gracious was the hand, which removed her from the evil to come. I never can mourn the death of infants. Eternity alone can tell us with what an *escape* they have been favoured. But the word of God leads our thoughts far beyond an *escape*. 'Suffer *the little children to come unto me*' was the blessed Saviour's command to his disciples; and he assigns the reason—'for *of such is the kingdom of God.*' Here, I apprehend, he refers, not merely to a *disposition* which forms part of the required meetness for a better world; but to a *fact*, and the fact is this—that when infants die before they attain to distinguish between good and evil, they are, through the merits of the Saviour, received into a better world; and that the number of those who die in infancy, is so large a proportion of those who die—that *of such*, it may be said, the kingdom of God is largely composed.

"Besides this consideration there is another, which, in my judgment, is decisive. At the last day, mankind are to be judged *according to their works*. But infants, not being able to distinguish right from wrong, have no works by which they can be judged. They are, therefore, in my view,

received, through the infinity of the Redeemer's atonement and mercy, into 'the number which no man can number,' and made everlasting monuments of the riches of the grace of God.

"But loving-kindness, my dear S— A—, has been richly manifested, not only to your child, which is now glorified, but, I would indulge the hope, to yourself. In proportion as your child was lovely, your danger was considerable. You might have been led to *idolize* your infant; and thus he who 'died for you' might have been robbed of your affections, and your child might have occupied, with *paramount* power, your thoughts, your time, and your heart. It was a wise saying of the good Matthew Henry, 'That is best for us which is best for our souls.' And if you are led, through the grace of the most Most High, (which grace he will give you if you humbly ask him) to love a Saviour-God before all things and all persons, you will eternally adore the mercy which took your child to heaven, and which cut a string which might have *bound* you to an evil and dangerous world."

I have alluded elsewhere to the straitened condition of Mr. Housman's pecuniary resources. For upwards of thirty years, certain members of his congregation, sensible of the incalculable debt they owed to their faithful pastor, and anxious to protect him from the paralysing incursions of poverty, presented him, through one of their body, with a liberal yearly gratuity. This gratuity, nearly the whole of which he expended in supplying his chapel with a curate, and without which, as he states in a letter to Mr. Collisson, he would have found it "utterly impossible to pay an assistant," was

generously continued until the period of his death. For many of the last years of his life, his entire income, *from every available source*, did not reach £200 per annum; and after his resignation of the Incumbency of St. Anne's, in 1836, it barely amounted, including the congregational benefaction, to £90. Yet, limited as were his means, he contrived, by observing a system of rigid domestic economy, to apply very considerable sums to purposes of charity and religion: sums far more considerable, I may add, than "prudent" and "provident" persons would have thought consistent with his narrow circumstances. His deep poverty abounded unto the riches of his liberality. His benevolence and generosity, of which I have had abundant opportunities of forming a pretty accurate opinion, were indeed among his most prominent virtues, and were in vigorous and constant exercise. He was never more happy than when contributing to the comfort or happiness of others. The Lord's poor and the Lord's cause in the world had claims upon him which strongly and abidingly interested his heart. "The Poor," he has said, "are objects of the tenderest compassion. They and the rich possess one common nature. They have the same feelings towards kindred and children. They are alike involved in the ruins of the same Fall. They are included in the one general invitation to seek and to receive mercy, and peace, and heaven, through Jesus Christ; and they who obtain the 'great salvation,' whether rich or poor, will rejoice together in that kingdom which cannot be moved. The poor, then, have every possible claim upon our sympathy in their several distresses,

and upon our kind and active help, to the extent of our means, in all their necessities. That heart surely is not a Christian heart which does not feel for them in their sorrows; neither can that hand be the hand of a Christian which is not opened for their succour and their comfort." His mode of *doing* a charity was characteristic of his general habits and principles. None could perform a kind act more kindly. He did it as if he were enjoying a privilege; as if he were receiving rather than conferring a favour. He imparted the *morale* as well as the *materiel* of benevolence; he added cordiality to liberality; and whilst the *money* which he gave relieved the poverty of the recipient, the gentle and sympathising *graciousness* which accompanied the gift, spoke consolation and encouragement to his neglected emotions. He was a dispenser of charity in the very best sense of the word, for he dispensed it in a spirit of affectionateness; and in numberless instances, some of which I have had the happiness of witnessing, the spirit of the benefactor was reciprocated by the spirit of the benefitted. Such, thanks be to God, is the law of our nature. It is the principle on which the Gospel rests; and it is the principle on which all human conduct, if answerable to Gospel requirements, must rest also. The love of gratitude is seldom appealed to in vain by the love of kindness. Kindness and gratitude may be said to bear to each other the relation of cause and effect; but then the kindness, besides being *real*, must be *shown* to be so. *Affected* kindness implies pride, and begets it; it is the pride of condescension, exciting the pride of inferiority.

In the year 1836, feeling himself no longer com-

petent to take an active part in the duties of his chapel, Mr. Housman addressed to his Diocesan a letter, of which the following is a copy, requesting his Lordship's permission to resign the Incumbency of St. Anne's.

" Lancaster, June 15, 1836.

" MY LORD.—Having entered, about four months since, upon the seventy-eighth year of my age, and experiencing great and increasing debility, both mental and bodily, I feel the propriety and necessity of requesting your Lordship's permission to resign the important charge of St. Anne's, Lancaster, which I have occupied, within two months, during the long space of forty years.

"I built the Chapel, (at that time being of ability to do so) and procured its consecration in the year 1796. I had the Grant of Nomination from the then Diocesan, and the acknowledged Patron of the Advowson of Lancaster, and likewise from the Vicar of the Parish Church, to myself and heirs for the term of fifty years. Several years afterwards it was discovered that there was some error in the grant, which Mr. Manby, the present Vicar, was pleased to call a mere clerical error, and of which he generously said that he should never think of taking advantage. Mr. Manby has indeed acted with the highest honour; and has informed me that if I died during his lifetime, it was his intention to give the nomination to my representatives. Mr. Manby was likewise pleased, within the last three or four months, thus to speak to me on the subject, with his characteristic 'You present, and I am dormant.'

"I have been introduced, within the last four



months, to a clergyman of the name of Levingston, of Cromb Whitwell, near York. Mr. Levingston is spoken of as a gentleman of great piety and of good talent. He has preached in my chapel, and was greatly approved. His disposition seems to be mild and affectionate, but united with sufficient energy of character. To have such a successor, who would and could take care of my flock when I am become entirely disabled from public duties, would be a great comfort to me in my declining days.

“If your Lordship should kindly accede to my proposed resignation in favour of Mr. Levingston, I will take care that the proper documents shall be forwarded to your Lordship

The excellent bishop, who had invariably treated Mr. Housman with the most gratifying and distinguished marks of kindness, accompanied his acquiescence in the wishes of the venerable minister with a very affectionate testimony to the fidelity and usefulness of his past life, and with the expression of an earnest hope that St. Anne’s might long continue to be tended by a pastor not less sound in his doctrinal principles and equally faithful in declaring them.

Upon the occasion of his Lordship’s first Visitation, Mr. Housman, in common with the rest of the clergy of the town, waited upon him immediately after he arrived in Lancaster, which happened to be on a Saturday evening. When Mr. Housman left the room, the Bishop, turning to one of the clergy standing near him, remarked that he was disappointed at not having been asked to preach at St. Anne’s, adding “that he should have consid-

ered it a privilege to be allowed to address the congregation assembling there." This sentiment was conveyed to Mr. Housman, who cheerfully invited his diocesan to occupy his pulpit. The request was readily complied with ; and in the evening of the next day, having preached in the parish church in the morning, his Lordship delivered an impressive sermon at St. Anne's ; in the course of which he referred in terms of profound and fervent respect to the character and labours of their aged pastor, reminding his hearers of the serious responsibility which that character and those labours had entailed upon them.

The respect thus publicly testified was unfeignedly reciprocated. Mr. Housman entertained a more than *official* regard for the person of his superior. At his hands he had experienced peculiar attention ; and episcopal civilities were things to which he had been but little accustomed. No wonder, then, that the considerate and Christian politeness of Dr. Sumner sank deep into his heart. "The good Bishop," he says in a short note which I received from him in 1834, "called upon me on Tuesday, and was as kind as kindness could make him. He spoke highly in favour of St. Anne's, and of its old and feeble minister." But it was for something better than personal courtesies, honourable as these were to both parties, that Mr. Housman loved and revered his Bishop. It was for the ardent and peaceful piety of his life, for the fidelity of his ministrations as a messenger of the Gospel of the blessed God, and for the laborious and conscientious manner in which the high functions of his office were uniformly discharged. "If

all ministers were like the Bishop of Chester," he once exclaimed, "there would be some grounds for the theory of Apostolical Succession." And in a letter to one of his congregation—to one, as he himself says, "whom I have numbered with my little flock"—he mentions his Lordship in the following words; "We have lately rejoiced to have our excellent Bishop at Lancaster. He is one of the right kind—taught of God, and influenced by the love of Christ. I had much conversation with him. He preaches, and he feels, that 'it is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' This is the inexhaustible theme of the Gospel ministry, and the prominent subject of the meditations of those who are running successfully the race that is set before them. Just as we can realize the glory of the person, and the love, and the redemption of the Son of God, so are we in humility, and hope, and heavenly affections. To win Christ, and to be found in him, is to have a sure *title* to Heaven; and to have Christ reigning in the heart, is to have a sure *meetness* for the holy and happy kingdom. May we, and ours, be numbered with all the 'the ransomed of the Lord' in glory everlasting! Farewell"—it is thus the letter concludes—"Let us abound in prayer; and the spirit of praise will not be far distant from us."

In one of Mr. Housman's letters to Mr. Levingston, dated the 6th of April, 1836, the following passage occurs. It is interesting, not only as bearing directly upon the subject of Mr. Housman's ministerial success, but as containing a tribute of sincere respect to the character of a highly distin-

guished and honoured labourer in another department of the Church of Christ.

"In retiring from my present situation, I would retire with the Publican's prayer on my lips and in my heart. But I would retire likewise in the spirit of thankfulness, and of adoring wonder at the gracious Saviour's condescension in blessing my poor labours to the everlasting salvation of many souls, through a long succession of years. \* \* \*

Why I obtruded myself on your attention, the following quotation will explain. In a note which I received from Mr. Dawson, of Aldcliffe Hall, near Lancaster, who is nephew to the excellent Mr. Clayton, sen., he says as follows: 'Having seen my venerable uncle Clayton, he inquired with much kindness after you; and on my mentioning your wish to appoint a minister at St. Anne's, he particularly requested me to name to you the Rev. Mr. Levingston, as a young man of decided piety and talent, and one whom he considers eminently qualified to meet your wishes, and to lead the congregation in the same steps in which you have so long conducted them.' After this testimony from the venerable Clayton, whom I have long revered, it is needless to express my earnest wish for your presence in Lancaster." "The congregation," he adds, "is very attentive and affectionate; and the post of St. Anne's, as a stand for the Gospel, very important."\*

\* Mr. Levingston did not remain long in Lancaster. The delicate health of his wife rendered a removal to a warmer climate expedient, or rather indispensable; and in the year 1837 he was succeeded at St. Anne's by the Rev. Henry O'Neill, M. A. "His character," says Mr. Housman, speaking of the latter gentleman, "is known to me as that of a faithful and able minister, and his name

Near the close of the preceding year, (1835) Mr. Housman had undertaken, at the instance of his friend Josias Booker, Esq., of Liverpool, to prepare for the press, a volume of sermons preached at St. Anne's. Towards this object Mr. Booker generously contributed a handsome sum of money; and the volume, which may be considered as owing its existence entirely to him, was published about the middle of 1836.\* Notwithstanding the disadvantages under which it was compiled, (the venerable author being greatly unfitted by extreme age and daily increasing infirmities, for active literary engagements) it comprises many discourses of very superior merit. They are plain, pointed, earnest, and affectionate; singularly free from redundant phraseology; few in words, but weighty in ideas.—Every sentence is a small treasury of sacred thought; every paragraph contains abundant matter for profitable reflection.

The commencement of one of the last discourses Mr. Housman ever wrote (perhaps the very last, since we do not possess a later manuscript) is far too important, for biographical purposes, to be omitted here. We have seen that in the first letter has been respectfully mentioned to a friend of mine by the excellent Bishop of the Diocese." In 1840 Mr. O'Neill retired from St. Anne's. The Vicar of Lancaster, in whom the appointment legally resided, having considerably intimated his intention to ratify the choice of the congregation, a requisition, subscribed by the principal pew-holders and owners of property in the chapel, (none objecting) was presented to the Rev. Charles Bury, M.A., of St. Luke's, Skerton, urgently inviting him to become their pastor. Mr. Bury, who was greatly esteemed in Skerton, where he had been permitted to be the instrument of much good, complied with the desire expressed in the requisition, and on Sunday, the 3d of May commenced his ministerial labours at St. Anne's.

\* By Seeley, 169 Fleet street, London.

which he addressed to the Rev. W. C. Wilson, in the year 1813, the cardinal principles of his preaching are briefly stated to be "the deep-rooted and total apostasy of man, and the glory and grace of Jesus." "In proportion," he adds, "as the former is really known and experienced, and the latter steadily and truly realized—humility, and love, and thankfulness, and obedience, mark the character. Through grace, my preaching has been principally, and especially lately, occupied with these two points, dwelling of course upon their collaterals, and explaining the consequences; and the Lord, I think, has set to his seal that this mode of preaching is according to his will." Hear him at *the close* of his long ministry. They are solemn words. The time of his departure was at hand; he had fought the good fight; he had kept the faith; he had nearly finished his course; and the crown of righteousness, prepared by the righteous Judge, was almost within his reach.

"Approaching towards the close of a long ministry, of upwards of half a century's continuance, I can bear my feeble but decided testimony that the preaching of 'Christ and him crucified' is the grand weapon, in the hands of the Eternal Spirit of converting souls. The wisdom of this world may object; the enmity of this world may revile; but in the midst of objections and revilings, the blessing of heaven is proclaiming that the preaching of THE CROSS is the power of God and the wisdom of God. Hence, so long as I may be permitted to speak, this will be *my leading subject*—Christ, the Lord from Heaven, dying for the rebellious; Christ, lifted up upon the cross, that he might draw all men unto

him. And, my dear friends, so long as you may be permitted to hear in the house of the Lord, be very careful that you hear where Jesus is exalted, and extolled, and raised very high, where he is proclaimed as the wisdom, and the righteousness, and the sanctification, and the redemption, of all who will be saved. God the Father infinitely loves his eternal Son; and he loves and he blesses that preaching which gives unto the Son the glory due unto his name."

Elsewhere, in the same discourse :—

"There are two weighty truths, my dear hearers, to which I would bear my solemn and unflinching testimony, if this were to be the last hour of my life. The one is this—There is **NO WAY** for a sinner to obtain mercy, reconciliation, and peace with God, but through a humble and soul-reliance on the atoning blood of Jesus. The second truth is this—the only way to obtain victory over sin, and to obtain holy and spiritual affections, is, not by *resolutions*, but by prayer for the spirit of God, and by simply trusting in the Saviour to answer the supplications. To *resolve*, is to depend upon *self*, upon an arm of flesh—and disappointment must follow. To pray, and then to trust to the Lord to impart the needed grace, is to trust in a faithfulness which is sure, in a power which is Almighty, in a mercy which is boundless, in a plenteous succour which never faileth."

Such were the almost dying declarations of the venerable founder of St. Anne's, as he calmly surveyed the Future and the Past.

If there be one scriptural proposition more clearly and positively enunciated than another, it is per-

haps this—that the successful exercise of the ministerial office, in the conversion and renewal of the hearts of men, is attributable to the influences of divine assistance; and that in order to secure these indispensable aids the truth must be preached *in love*. In the firm and habitual belief of this most important principle, Mr. Housman lived and acted; and just in proportion as ambassadors of Christ submit themselves to its salutary guidance, will be the measure of their usefulness here, and the amount of their recompense hereafter. The very first discourse delivered at St Anne's contains an interesting passage on the matter before us.

“At one time we behold him” (Mr. Housman is speaking of St. Paul) “breathing out threatenings against the inoffensive Christians; at another, we see the fervent and laborious apostle preaching the faith which once he had destroyed. At one time we behold him a man of blood, dealing around him, like the pestilence, dismay, confusion, and death; at another, we see the affectionate servant of the holy Jesus, diffusing, like the sun, on every side, light, and life, and beauty, and comfort. We behold him with the Scriptures in his hand, and the Saviour in his heart, flying from city to city and from kingdom to kingdom. As he passed along, pagan superstition humbled herself at the foot of the Cross of Immanuel. As he passed along, the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled; instead of the thorn came up the fir-tree, and instead of the briar came up the myrtle-tree. As he passed along, the powers of darkness trembled and were confounded; their usurped dominion was shaken and destroyed, and the kingdom of Jesus established on its ruin.



“But by what means were these wonderful effects produced? Were the subtilties of logic called in to regulate the tempers of the mind? He tells the Corinthians he did not come to them with wisdom of words. Did the refinements of philosophy subserve the cause of the Redeemer, by extending their influence from the understanding to the heart? In matters of religion he renounces such assistance, for in this concern he classes ‘philosophy’ with ‘vain deceit.’ Did the strong arm of secular power procure him an audience or enforce his admonitions? That arm was indeed stretched out—but it was stretched to intimidate, to oppress, and to destroy. The weapons of his warfare were not carnal. He went forth to the conflict leaning upon the promise and the strength of his Redeemer, *and speaking the truth in love*. He published, with becoming feelings, the everlasting Gospel; and the publication was accompanied by the mighty and effectual energy of the Spirit of God. Here, then, is both instruction and encouragement for the ministers of Christ. Like the apostle, we must execute our commission in dependence upon divine aid, and in love; and because we serve the same master, and are included in the same gracious and extensive promise, ‘Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world,’ we may, in our measure, expect similar effects.”

In juxtaposition with this passage may be placed a third extract from the discourse already cited. How beautifully the record of his earlier life is attested and confirmed by that of his declining years!

“God giveth the increase while his ministers are declaring his eternal truth. Those ministers may

deeply feel their own *nothingness*; they may have to lament their coldness, even in their warmest moments; they may have much occasion to mourn over the *defilement* which clings even to their best of duties; they may be astonished that instruments so weak and so unworthy should be used by the great and holy God in accomplishing the salvation of even a single soul. BUT STILL, IF THEY SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE, THEY WILL NOT SPEAK IN VAIN. The promise will be fulfilled, '*my* word shall not return unto me void.' Many a darkened mind will be enlightened; many a one dead in sin, will be quickened; many a rebellious soul will be subdued to the obedience of the faith: many a troubled conscience will obtain peace; many a worldly heart will become spiritual; many a wandering foot will be turned into the good ways of God. And such are some of you. Adored be the God of mercy and of power."

"His highest glory," says Mr. Statter, "was to be instrumental in glorifying his Divine Master." To use his own language in reference to the apostle Paul, "he was impatient to hang every honour upon the cross of Jesus, and then cordially and joyfully to say, 'To thy name be glory for ever. Amen.'"

Mr. Housman never preached in St. Anne's after he resigned the Incumbency. His last public performance of divine service was at Saint Luke's, Skerton, on the morning of Sunday the 7th of August, 1836. About the middle of the service he was suddenly seized with extreme dizziness in the head, and being unable to go through the prayers prescribed by his church, the congregation was dis-

missed, and I accompanied him home. He attributed his indisposition to the excessive heat of the chapel; whatever the cause may have been which produced an effect so melancholy and alarming, the distressing symptoms were instantly removed on his going out into the air. In the evening he appeared as well as usual, and conversed with more than ordinary animation. Several weeks afterwards he baptized two of his grand-children in St. Anne's Chapel; and it used to please him to think that his last ministrations in the sanctuary were on behalf of the offspring of children who had never occasioned him a single pang.

Though withdrawn from the public engagements of the ministry, he felt himself still a labourer in the service of his Lord and Master Jesus Christ; and under this impression, spent a portion of almost every day in visiting the poorer members of the truly religious part of the congregation. These visits are fondly treasured in many a grateful bosom. An aged Christian, whose pilgrimage is nearly over, remarked to me in reference to them—"They were blessed moments, Sir. He used to come to me every fortnight; and when I heard his step beside the door, my heart was glad within me. He had always a heavenly smile for me, and a few heavenly words to comfort or support me with. I believe he never left the house without saying, 'Now don't forget to look to Jesus. Be often looking to Jesus.' He was very feeble and could not bear much fatigue; but his spirit was just what it had always been, full of grace and love. I used to think every visit would be the last, and he seemed to think so too. 'The tabernacle,' he one

day said to my son, 'is going fast;—but let it go.' He was quite ready for the summons, *whenever* it should come. Oh! how much I owe to *him*! He was the means of saving my soul;"—and then, bursting into tears, she added, "you must forgive me if I weep—for I loved him."

One of the severest blows Mr. Housman ever sustained, and he had sustained many, was the death of his second wife, who, after gradually declining for several months, expired at Greenfield on the morning of Sunday, the 29th of January, 1837, in the fulness of faith. "To miss a countenance" (he has beautifully said) "which, day by day, and year by year, has been turned towards one with looks of benignity and kindness, is a *real* trial." This grievous dispensation of Providence bowed him to the ground; his children, many of them settled in marriage at a distance, no longer lived beneath his roof; and at the age of seventy-eight, weak in body and enfeebled in mind, he, the most domestic of men, the tenderest of parents, the best of husbands, was left in the world alone. Fearful indeed, as they who witnessed them can testify, were the effects of this bereavement upon his health and frame, and desolate indeed was his condition; but the considerate and delicate kindness of his friends did all to assuage his sorrow that human kindness could, and the spirit of love and comfort that had supported him in former trials was with him now, and mercifully strengthened him to bear the weight of his exceeding heavy grief.

The last moments of his beloved partner afforded an abundant source of satisfaction and encouragement to those who survived. She, to whom ostenta-

tion of all kinds, but especially religious ostentation, was ever hateful, departed out of life as meekly and as modestly as she had passed through it. Although blest, in answer to many earnest prayers, with the entire possession of intellect till within half a minute of her release, she spoke but little on the all-engrossing subject of her eternal change, preferring rather to lie, with closed eyes and folded hands, patiently awaiting the summons of her God. Once she exclaimed—"What a great Redeemer! What a full atonement! What a free salvation!"—pausing solemnly between each sentiment. To one of her daughters she said, "What should I do if I had to seek a Saviour *now*?—and shortly afterwards, the same daughter, bending down to listen if she breathed, heard her repeating, in a low firm voice, Toplady's well-known hymn, "Rock of Ages, cleft for me." Upon the second line of the third stanza, "Simply to thy Cross I cling," she dwelt with peculiar fervour, paused at the end, and then repeated it several times with the emphasis of one who was urging a promise. At half past ten o'clock she took leave of her dear husband. A union of nearly fifty years' duration, contracted in mutual respect and love, and favoured by God's signal blessing in a variety of ways, may not be dissolved without a pang. The interview was short; the parting was full of pain. With characteristic humility and self-abasement, she entreated him to pardon her many errors and imperfections; declared an unshaken confidence in the sufficiency of Christ's mediatorial work; and expressed a strong conviction that she was about to see him face to face in the kingdom

of their Father. "Don't you *think* I shall be happy?" she eagerly inquired. "I am as *certain* of it," was the answer, "as I can be of anything future." "Yes," she rejoined, "I too have good hope." Soon after, she said, "I have had, through life, a great and faithless fear of the *act* of dying; but it is gone now; there is nothing to dread." At twenty minutes past two on the following morning, her head resting on the shoulder of her youngest child, she fell asleep in Jesus.\*

To the surprise of those who best knew his constitutional diffidence and reserve, particularly on subjects that closely affected his interior emotions, Mr. Housman repeatedly mentioned this severe bereavement. In the remembrance of the long-tried and eminent Christian virtues of the departed, and in the realizing contemplation of the unutterable happiness she had been called to enjoy, he seemed indeed to find the sweetest consolation. To her

\* To the same daughter she presented, not more than an hour or two before her dissolution, a manuscript volume of extracts for every day in the year. This volume, which consists of very valuable materials, selected during a comprehensive and somewhat desultory course of reading, was begun on the first of January, 1813. It concludes thus—

"God, in great mercy, has spared me to complete these daily portions. Here is what I may call the bread of life broken into 365 parts. By many of them I have often been strengthened and refreshed, and they still retain their nutritious and cheering qualities. They are like the manna which Moses laid up before the Lord which could not perish. My Omer is now filled; and I leave it to my children, that they may see and taste (when I have passed over Jordan) the food wherewith I have been sustained in the wilderness. They will find it composed of the incorruptible seed of the word; and, I can further add, laid up for them before the Lord in prayer, that those so dear to me may eat thereof and live for ever."

exalted condition as a glorified saint, he was perpetually referring; "She is a crowned one now," was the all but supreme consideration of his mind. He appeared to be much absorbed in anticipations of the beatific vision; and would occasionally speak of "the number which no man can number," and of "Him that sitteth upon the 'Throne,'" like one who had already stood before it himself. "What a Temple!—and what a Light to lighten it!" was constantly on his lips. His quiet and capacious soul, enlarging and brightening day by day, panted to be gone. To live was Christ; but to die was *gain*.

Shortly after his wife's death, Mr. Housman withdrew from Greenfield to a small house on the Green Area, where he resided till his departure for Liverpool in November. He left Greenfield with many and tender regrets.

When exercised upon topics of merely temporal interest, his mind, during this desolate period of existence, painfully indicated the debilitating effects of age. It was in the faculty of *memory* that the evidences of decay more especially appeared. Yet treacherous as this invaluable faculty occasionally proved, its retentiveness and readiness on *spiritual* subjects were providentially continued—a peculiarity which Mr. Housman often noticed in grateful terms, and to which, just before his retirement from Lancaster, he one evening, while walking with a dear and highly respected friend, bore a striking as well as characteristic testimony. Having begun some remarks on a matter of comparative indifference, he suddenly stopped short, and lamented his inability to proceed. His companion, anxious to

relieve him from the embarrassment of his position, kindly observed upon the frequency of such acts of forgetfulness in the decline of life, and added, "I dare say, Mr. Housman, you recollect events which took place forty or fifty years ago, far better than those which happened only recently?" "Yes," he replied, "I do: but I remember best of all *the events of our Lord's time.*" Upon these events he would discourse with the familiarity of an eye-witness, and a personal participator in their glory. Faith, the evidence of things not seen, gave to the past the distinctness of the present.

He left Lancaster, I feel persuaded, with a presentiment that he should never see it any more; and a few days before his departure, (much as he disliked saying good-bye, when the word had a real meaning attached to it, and referred to a long future of separation) paid farewell visits to some of the oldest or most dearly regarded of his friends, in parting with whom he was observed to exhibit extreme emotion. "I should wish to bid adieu to *all* my congregation," he remarked one afternoon, "but that is out of the question. They know that I love them, and that my prayers are offered up, night and morning, on their behalf." "The Lord has done great things for St. Anne's," he added—"and he will *continue* his loving-kindness and his mercy."

On being asked by one of the most devoted of his friends, not many days before his departure, "how he did," he replied in these striking words—"I will answer *you* as Mr. Romaine answered *me*, when I put to him a similar question. It was on Blackfriars Bridge—the last time I ever saw him.



‘I want,’ said he, ‘to get more of the unsearchable riches of Christ.’ So do I. Like good Mr. Romaine, I want to get more of the unsearchable riches of Christ.” Thus did this venerable saint, forgetting the things which were behind, reach forth to those which were before, and press toward the mark for the prize of his high calling. His desire for a fuller manifestation of God in Christ, true to the insatiable instincts of immortality, expanded in proportion as fuller manifestations were imparted.

On the 29th of October, the Sunday but one before he left Lancaster, he requested me to accompany him to Skerton Church, near the east end of which his wife was buried. When he had reached the bottom of the hill leading to the church, he paused for a moment as if in doubt, and then anxiously inquired, “Shall we see the grave?” Upon my informing him that we should not *necessarily* pass it, he proceeded. We had not, however, gone far, before he turned hastily round, and observing, “You will think me a foolish old man—but I *dare* not go,” retraced his steps. A little further on he said, “Age has not yet deadened my feelings; this *is* a mercy. I think I am as keenly alive to kindness as ever I was—and to the *recollection* of kindness.” I understood this beautiful tribute to the tenderness of the dead.

The last five months of Mr. Housman’s life were spent at the house of his son-in-law, R. W. Prichard, Esq. Woodside, near Liverpool. Many of the letters which he wrote from this place to one of his daughters, are truly significant of the settled tone and temper of his mind. Though generally brief, for he was incapable of continued ex-

ertion, they breathe a spirit of the warmest affection for those who had rendered themselves worthy of his regard, and are distinguished by a sentiment of implicit dependence upon the goodness and mercy of that Saviour whose name he had so long delighted to magnify and honour. In one of these, dated January 10th, 1838, he says, in his own peculiarly concise and pointed manner, "Yesterday I purchased for myself a great treat at a small expense. The article purchased is *yours*; the comfort of making the purchase is *mine*. Few indeed are the sources of my earthly consolation now; but while the lives and affections of those I love are continued, I may say with an apostle, "I have all things, and abound." And in another letter, of nearly the same date, having discussed with remarkable clearness, a rather complicated matter of business, he adds—"My memory, however, in these things occasionally fails me. But while I can remember, with some degree of feeling, *that the Saviour died for me*—pounds, shillings and pence, may at times perplex me, but can do nothing more." These are the last words he ever wrote.

His reading, whilst at Woodside, was but slight, and was confined almost exclusively to a volume of Dr. Chalmers's Sermons (those preached at the Tron Church, Glasgow); Joseph Milner's discourses on the churches of Asia; John Owen on the glory of Christ; and a small pocket-testament. The first of these books was a great favourite; I think he prized it more highly than any of the author's works. Not three months before his death he presented me with a copy, and in the short note which accompanied the gift thus expressed him-

self in reference to a portion of its contents—"Sermon the Xth is particularly instructive. I could say to every one who really feels it, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.'" The copy of Milner was presented to him by a lady, one of the most beloved of his congregation; he valued it exceedingly, and bequeathed it to his youngest daughter in the following passage—"I am enjoying a daily repast in the company of Joseph Milner on the Churches. If I should not live to return, *the book is yours.*" The little testament before mentioned was the last book he ever read. For years his constant companion—in his study, his solitary walks, and his visits to the sick—it continued to be so as long as he retained the power of perusing it. He seemed as if he could not bear it out of his sight.

A few weeks before his dissolution I enjoyed the the privilege and pleasure of spending several days in his society. Though greatly changed since his departure from Lancaster (for death had been making *rapid* encroachments of late) he was able to converse without much difficulty, and retained, in undiminished strength and sweetness, his habitual cheerfulness of spirits. The extreme *gentleness* of his disposition, his susceptibility of kindness and his gratitude for it, the instinctive quickness with which he detected the merest *symptoms* of attention in those about him, and his refined delicacy in acknowledging them, were never so apparent as now. It was beautiful to see the freshness and the warmth of this good old man's affections. So much love in one so aged I could not have imagined.

My recollections of these few days are of the most agreeable kind. "Good thoughts," says one

who valued both his ministry and person, "are sure to come when you think of Mr. Housman;"—I thank God that I have found it to be so. He never left the house, and I was constantly with him. It was delightful to be near him;—so much and such genuine humbleness—so much profound and unaffected simplicity of devotion, combined with such maturity of knowledge—happiness so grave and so majestic—such incomparable meekness, in the midst of such glory. To see a Christian like him, is *indeed* to see a great sight; it is to see the noblest and highest style of man; it is to see one "who is next unto an angel." Mr. Housman was ripe for heaven. His heart, his treasure, his meditations, long detached from earthly anxieties, were there already; and the cloud that was to take him up, shined upon his countenance. The expression of his features was unutterably engaging; his looks were the looks of one who gazed upon Him that is invisible. The painful peculiarities of old age—selfishness, impatience, inconsiderate haste, and petulant harshness of thought and word—disturbed not his. Honour to the religion of Jesus, the renewer and beautifier of life, that it was so! These things were all absorbed in the serene and strong spirituality which possessed him. Born of the Spirit, he seemed *all* spirit. The shade had passed upon his *mind*; but his *soul* was left without a shadow. The losses of nature were the gains of grace. Amid the failings of intellect, and the hard trials of bodily decay, the grand doctrines he had so long and so consistently maintained, were permitted to support him with an extraordinary measure of blessedness and

power. In him, if in any one, the evangelical promises of *temporal* beatitude were verified. In him, if in any one, the Gospel had its perfect work;—freedom from every thing unholy, sordid, and discontented; purified affections, hopes at once substantial and seraphic, and an abundant impartation of the peace which passeth all understanding. He was indeed delivered into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. He was more akin to the other world than to this. He had partaken of the divine nature largely: he was *full* of the Holy Ghost; he was one with Christ. The light into which he had been called, and to which, for upwards of half a century, he had been steadily advancing, by an ever-brightening and an ever-widening path, was truly *marvellous* light.\*

What has been recorded of his favourite Leighton, to whom, in the quiet depths and ethereal sweetness of his piety, he bore a near resemblance, may with equal truth be affirmed of him—that he never uttered a syllable, whether gay or grave, which did not more or less directly tend to spiritual edification. This was peculiarly the case now. I remember reading to him one morning a passage from a book which I had just purchased, in which a true love of God was represented, according to the philosophical theory of disinterestedness, as resulting from a devout contemplation of his character, attributes, and perfections. When I had

\* Am I unduly exalting *the creature*? God forbid. It is God that worketh in the *best* of men, both to will and to do; by the grace of God they are what they are. "He that praises Richard Hooker," exclaims the simple-hearted biographer of that ever-honoured saint, "praises God, who hath given such gifts to man." The Lord is glorified in the righteous.

finished it, he exclaimed—"Very fine writing, but very bad divinity. The Bible tells a different story. It sends us to God *as sinners*, and requires our dutiful love *for what he has done for us*. We must be Christians *from gratitude*. We love him, BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US. Not that *we* loved God—oh no!—but that *he* loved us. Here is the grand mystery and foundation of man's redemption. Herein is love!—free, benevolent, infinite love. Love God for his love to you, and then you will *proceed* to love him for the intrinsic loveliness of his character. You are on safe ground if you see your *obligations* to God. The first glimpse a sinner gets of the glory of God, is *his pardoning mercy*; in fact, divine forgiveness is the manna upon which the babe in Christ and the father in Christ must alike feed. But read Dr. Chalmers's ninth and tenth Tron sermons, (pointing to the volume, which lay near.) They will explain all I mean as to the *nature* of love to God, and far better than I can. I have neither mind nor strength left. Those sermons, especially the tenth, might be read with profit at least once every week. Chalmers, I think, is the first Divine and Preacher of the age." "Think of the *kindness* of the great God," he would repeatedly say; "you cannot think of it too much. It is the most affecting of all considerations. You cannot feel his kindness without confessing your own unworthiness; and if you see your own unworthiness and his kindness in one view (and the Cross represents both) adoring gratitude will follow. The strange immensity of the love of God cannot be too much exalted. Was ever love like this? All is mystery and mercy.

Yes, on every part and process of the great salvation wrought out by the Son of God, there is one and the same image and superscription—‘Here is love which passeth knowledge.’” One morning, after we had been conversing about his son, the Rev. Thomas Housman, of Broomsgrove, who added greatly, by his respectful attentions, to the comfort of his parent’s declining years, and of whom Mr. Housman invariably spoke in language the most affectionate, he said—“I shall advise him to select for his first text in his new church the beautiful and cheering words of the Angel of the Lord to the shepherds at Bethlehem—‘Behold, I bring you good tidings of *great joy*, which shall be to all people.’ Here is the *intention* of the Gospel—kindness, you see, nothing but kindness. It is this which secures the hearts of angels, and it is this which secures, if they ever are secured, the hearts of sinners also. If I had to live my life over again, and possessed my present feelings, I would begin with this text, and end with it.”\* “Oh!” he continued, after a short pause, “we don’t sufficiently preach Love:—we don’t sufficiently dwell upon the *kindness* of the great God in Christ. Look at the *freeness* of the Gospel-offer—‘Whosoever *will*, let him take the water of life;’ look at the *extent* of it—‘If *any* man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.’ Oh! the freeness and the extent of the offer of life in Christ Jesus! It demands our adoring gratitude and praise. Whatever you do, don’t forget that the God of the Gospel is a God of

\* A month later, he made three ineffectual attempts, Mr. Prichard informs me, to write a sermon on this interesting passage. His mind was full of the subject, but he no longer retained the power of transferring his thoughts and feelings to paper

Love." On another occasion, having adverted, in a temper of pardonable sadness, to the changed and decaying condition of his mind, he added, "But I have reason to thank God, and I *do* thank him, for this—that he leaves me the power of recollecting the most comforting portions of his word. These I never forget. They are with me at all hours, and I know not what I should do without them. My intellect is not equal to much; I can scarcely grasp two ideas at once; but I can still comprehend, I can still realize, (and his eye brightened as he spoke) that grandest of all ideas—the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ." The Bible was his rod and his staff as he passed through the Valley of Desolation.

He took great delight in acknowledging that the world, in its moral and religious aspects and circumstances, was improving; but he seldom expressed these views without greatly regretting the culpable insensibility of even good men to their extraordinary privileges. "It should be a constant and a general prayer," he often said, "that the Lord would be pleased *to show us our privileges*. We are all living deplorably *below* them." He thought that Christianity, as experimentally exhibited, had lost in depth what it had gained in length and breadth; that the finer and more elevated characteristics of Christian faith were sacrificed to the love of bustle, excitement, combination and activity; that there was a want, not so much of sincere and conscientious piety, as of high spirituality of mind. "The number of *small* Christians," he used to observe, "is wonderfully increased; but there is a lack, I suspect, of *tall*



Christians. "There are more Marthas than Marys." "Christians," he would also remark, "are too much *in haste* now-a-days. It is a great acquirement to be a *waiting* Christian." This sentiment he frequently reiterated.

"There are two objects," he said to me one day, "which we should be hourly endeavouring to have fully in our view—Sin and Christ; the baseness and danger of sin; the grace and glory of the Saviour of sinners. A view of sin will alarm; a view of the Saviour will hush the storm in the soul. A view of sin will bring down the loftiest transgressor into the dust; a view of the Saviour will raise him and bid him live. A view of sin will show him hell to be deserved; a view of the Saviour will show him that heaven is purchased, and that heaven may be attained. Try, through the revelation of the Spirit, to be getting daily better acquainted with these two objects. You cannot thoroughly know Christ, without thoroughly knowing sin first; and if you thoroughly know sin, you cannot *but* know Christ." And again, the same morning; "Be spending much of your time in looking unto Jesus. This is the grand secret of spiritual prosperity. He passes by before you in his ordinances; he walks in the midst of the churches. His love appears in the *invitations* of his word; his faithfulness in the *promises*; his holiness in the *precepts*; and his justice in the *threatenings*. Oh! what a Jesus to look upon! What a Jesus to look unto!"

Humility, ever a prominent virtue in the character of Mr. Housman, seemed to prevail more and more as eternity drew near. "In our least

sinful moments," he said one day, "what are we but sinners *trying* to be holy?" And in a spirit akin to that which suggested this remark, he observed on another occasion—"I should wish the last prayer of my soul to be what I know it *ought* to be, an *earnest entreaty for mercy*." Mercy was his pleasant food and song, and a Gospel broken heart his sweet companion. He used to lament with unfeigned sincerity, the comparative defectiveness of his ministerial labours; and repeatedly declared to me that though it had pleased God to honour and bless them in an extraordinary degree, he had been at best but an unprofitable servant. "My greatest joy," he was accustomed to say, adopting the language and sentiment of one who possessed distinguished godliness, "is, that Christ has done so much for me; and my greatest grief, that I have done so little for Christ." He exhibited very apparently, the union of self-abasement and hope. The head upon which the "beautiful crown" was descending, *bowed* to receive it. He was the meekest of Christians. His vast attainments, so obvious to others, were lost to himself in the perfect righteousness and surpassing glory of his Redeemer, and in the remembrance of that day when every mask must come off, and when a true estimate will be made of all. Never did one who abounded so much in good works, place upon good works so little reliance. He depended—for justification, and sanctification, and glorification—simply and entirely upon God in Christ. The love and grace of God, as manifested in and through his Son Jesus Christ—and not any merits of his own—engaged his almost undivided attention. This,

the great and precious theme of his pastoral addresses, was the theme also of his latest meditations.

Though tended, during his sojourn beneath the roof of his son-in-law, with unexampled affection, and untiring care, Mr. Housman evinced remarkable eagerness to return to Lancaster; it was accordingly arranged that he should leave Woodside for his own home on Saturday, the 3d of March. On the morning of that day, however, his bodily weakness was such as to render a journey of fifty miles absolutely impossible. But he was resolved to attempt it; and, in order to try his strength, determined to walk from Mr. Prichard's residence to the pier, a distance of about a quarter of a mile. Supported on each side by a near and dear relative, he at length reached the Mersey in a state of deplorable exhaustion;—slowly and painfully, his head drooping heavily forward, he tottered on board the steamboat which was to carry him across; but no sooner had we succeeded in leading him to the cabin, which was crowded with passengers than he sunk back upon one of the benches, pale and speechless. It was a trying moment; never shall I forget it. After the lapse of a second or two he lifted up his eyes to heaven; and in a tone of singular emphasis and sweetness, his countenance glowing with hope, uttered the following lines,—

Underneath the Saviour's throne,  
Parting is a thing unknown;—

repeating the first of them several times.

To proceed home was out of the question. The boat arrived at the Liverpool side of the river in a few minutes; and, in a few minutes more, his

youngest daughter and myself, whose engagements in Lancaster made our presence there indispensable, were beyond the sight of his parting tears.

Mr. Housman now began to decline rapidly. "The assurance that his pilgrimage was nearly over," says Mr. Prichard, "gave additional brightness to his ever bright and beaming countenance. He was quite free from pain, and quite ready to depart. If he had a wish to live, it was only that he might be able to revisit the scene of his labours, and take an affectionate farewell of those he so ardently loved in the faith. Silent aspirations to heaven appeared to be his continual employment; and at meal-times, though none entered into social converse more readily, or enjoyed it more than he did, it was evident, from the frequent uplifting of his eyes, that the great Giver of both temporal and spiritual blessings engrossed the chief attention of his soul. Some of those about him being occupied on one occasion in singing a hymn, the burden of which was "Glory, Glory," he quickly caught the words, with much apparent delight, and remarked, 'Though I never had a voice for singing, yet, when I get into heaven, I will sing *that* song as well as any of you.' Frequently afterwards he would call for the hymn, and took great pleasure in listening to it.' \* \* "He often regretted that Ministers of the Gospel do not sufficiently, either in their matter or their manner, evince the true characteristics of the Gospel, which are comprehended, he said, in the term *loving-kindness*; and often added, that souls are to be *won* to Christ; that 'truths harshly thundered forth or rudely pressed' would never make a loving and consequently a true con-

vert, but that they should rather be 'like his purpose, gracious, kind, and sweet.' \* \* Being, in the fullest sense of the words, 'a man of peace,' he had a decided aversion to anything approaching to religious controversy. With what alacrity and delight he would turn from uncertain speculations to the love inspiring announcements of the Gospel, they only can tell who have witnessed the transition."\*

Those who know the retiringness and delicacy of Mr. Housman's character, his unaffected humility, his detestation of religious parade, his horror of what are popularly termed "triumphant departures," will be prepared to hear that the last moments of his life furnished but scanty materials for a "dying scene."† Miraculous visions, feverish extasies, exhausting transports, do not often disturb the holy serenity of an *aged* Christian's latter end: for him are reserved the sacred *solemnities* of faith. "My state of mind," said Andrew Fuller, "is this; no despondency, no raptures;"—and such was Mr. Housman's. It was a state of radiant tranquillity; the peace which cometh down from heaven, and the love which passeth knowledge, divinely united. The house in which he lay was daily beset by friendly inquirers, many of them desirous to be admitted to the society of its venerable inmate; but with one or two exceptions, in favour of members of St. Anne's who came to see him, he affectionately denied all solicitations

\* "The angels," says Jeremy Taylor, "worship and obey, but dispute not; and our quarrels and impertinent wranglings about religion are nothing else but the want of the measure of this state."

† See Christian Observer, No. 421, p. 50.

of this kind, and requested that the few remaining sands of existence might be suffered to drop away quietly in the presence of his children. With Bishop Hall he seemed to consider that the great work of death is one that must be done *alone*; accordingly he lay much in silence; and but for an almost constant moving of the lips, and an occasional raising of the hand or of the eyes, a by-stander might have supposed him to be asleep. These were doubtless seasons of most intimate communion with his God. Frequently, however, he would turn to the anxious watchers at his side, and with a smile of the sweetest expression calmly allude to the glory that awaited him;—still more frequently, the smile was all he had to give.

About the middle of March an alarming change took place in his health, and his medical attendant, W. Stevenson, Esq., apprized Mr. Prichard that his dissolution was fast approaching. On the 25th of March my wife was summoned to Woodside. She found him much altered in appearance, but his countenance brightened when she entered the room; and throwing one arm around her neck, and the other about that of her sister, he exclaimed, “Now I *am* happy, truly happy. I have my two gems close to me: I can only sing Mercy, Mercy.” The tears flowed rapidly down his cheeks, as he gazed upon his children.

After this day he was never permitted to be alone. “It is quite delightful,” says one of his daughters, in a letter which lies before me, “to be with him in these his last moments. His gratitude for the attention he receives knows no bounds. Everything that is done for him is right; and

when he cannot speak he acknowledges our kindness by smiles the most beautiful I ever beheld. His mind is generally quite collected, and frequently he will repeat, in an under tone, his favourite hymn,

‘Come, let us join our cheerful songs.’

To-day, when he reached the line ‘For he was slain for us,’ he added, ‘Tell this to my dear, *dear* brother.’ Since my arrival here I have slept in a small bed in his room. Often in the night, when he thinks I am asleep, I hear him say

‘Ten thousand thousand are their tongues,  
But all their joys are one.’”

In other letters by the same writer, I find the following passages;—“Papa is perfectly calm and happy, and often alludes to his death. I do not believe a single doubt has ever crossed his mind. He said this morning, ‘I have settled all my worldly affairs; and my eternal concerns, I feel convinced, are settled for me by one who cannot err. Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace.’ \* \* \* ‘This is a changing world, but there remaineth a rest—a *sweet* rest. In a few days more I shall have entered upon it. It is a bright prospect, and I long for it; but I must not be impatient. Not *my* will, but *thine*, O Lord.’” \* \* \* “Yesterday, when Mr. Prichard, on his return from Liverpool to dinner, came into his room, and said, ‘You are still with us, Mr. Housman,’ his reply was, (and I wish you could have seen him as he spoke) ‘Yes—here I am, and here I shall remain, until it please the Lord to take me to himself; and then I shall sing of mercy and of

judgment. Yea, unto thee, O Lord, will I sing, for ever and ever.' " \* \* \* "He is much gratified by the anxiety evinced by so many of his congregation, and said to me to-day, 'Give my love to them *all*, but especially to my dear and only brother, and to all at Lune Bank. I love them very tenderly.' And then, after a pause, 'I love St. Anne's; but I leave my people in good hands.' " \* \* \* "He frequently inquires after his brother, of whom he invariably speaks in terms of true affection; and to-day, when he saw me writing to you, he said, 'Give him my fondest love, and tell him I wish him every good, both in this world and in the next.' \* \* \* His affectionate manner towards all of us is truly delightful, and will afford us many happy recollections when he is gone. He looked at me about an hour ago, and said, 'I often think of some lines by Cowper, which well apply to thee and me.' On asking him which they were, he repeated the following stanza of a poem to Mrs. Urwin. The passage, you remember, refers to *her needles*. He substituted my name for that of Mrs. Urwin.

'For could I see nor them nor thee,  
What sight worth seeing could I see?  
The sun would rise in vain for me,  
My Agnes!'"

He continued sensitively alive to kindness. "This morning," writes the same affectionate and dutiful child, "whilst I was giving him his breakfast, he looked into my face with a sweet smile, and said, 'I once used to feed *you*; but you are now *my* nurse;'"—and when a parcel of white violets which I had gathered for him in one of the fields near Lune Bank, was put into his hand, he raised



it to his lips and kissed it, saying, "I shall never again see the spot where those flowers grew. Give him my best thanks for the present."

Mr. Prichard's testimony confirms all that has been said of his gratitude, and resignation, and trust, and unshadowed hope of glory in these his dying moments. His language abounded with expressions of obligation to those who waited upon him, and of devout thankfulness to God for his unspeakable mercies. The smallest mark of attention elicited the warmest acknowledgments; and not a drop of water, however greatly needed, moistened his lips, until his heart had poured out its praises to the giver of *all* good for the unmerited blessing. Of death he spoke as of a long-familiar journey; his mind, penetrated with a perpetual sense of the divine presence, feared no evil. Why should it? He was going *home*; going within the *inner* circle of the whole family in heaven and earth named of the Lord Jesus Christ; going to the tender bosom of an infinitely disinterested friend, who had guided him through perils mightier than those of the dark valley, and cheered him with the promise of everlasting support. He was afraid of nothing but impatience; and his God, kind to the last, kept him until patience had done its perfect work.

At noon on Thursday, the 19th, he fell into a deep stupor, from which he never awoke excepting for about half a minute on the following night. Mr. Prichard not hearing him breathe, went to the bed-side, and bent over his face. He slowly opened his eyes; and fixing them steadily and earnestly on Mr. Prichard for a few seconds smiled;—then raised one of his hands very slightly, as he was

accustomed to do when thankful, and again sunk into a state of unconsciousness. At twenty minutes past two o'clock, on the morning of Sunday, the 22nd of April, 1838, this meek and holy Christian entered upon the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

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His remains were conveyed to Lancaster, on Thursday the 26th, and lay at his house on the Green Area until the following morning. The countenance was but little changed by death. Somewhat thinner, and more pale, it wore the same expression of sweet and patient gravity, the same serene and heavenly smile, which characterized it in life.

On the 27th, a vast concourse of people, nearly all of whom were habited in black, assembled on the Green Area, and, headed by the Rev. the Vicar of Lancaster, accompanied by most of the clergy and ministers of the town and neighbourhood, attended the body to the grave. It was interred in a vault in the burial-ground of St. Luke's at Skerton, the funeral service being performed by the Rev. Charles Bury and the Rev. Henry O'Neill conjointly.

In the course of the year 1838, a handsome mural tablet, bearing the following inscription, was placed within the communion-rails of St. Anne's.\*

\* It was executed by Mr. Fawcett, of Lancaster.

THIS TABLET IS ERECTED,  
 BY THE MEMBERS OF ST. ANNE'S CONGREGATION,  
 TO THE MEMORY OF  
 THE REV. ROBT. HOUSMAN, A. B.  
 THE FOUNDER AND FOR FORTY-ONE YEARS  
 THE BELOVED MINISTER OF THIS CHAPEL.

HIS NAME AND LABOURS ARE INTIMATELY ASSOCIATED  
 WITH THE PROGRESS OF "PURE AND UNDEFILED RELIGION"  
 IN THIS TOWN.

BORN FEBY. 25TH, 1759, DIED APRIL 22ND, 1838.

*'He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith;  
 and much people was added unto the Lord.'*

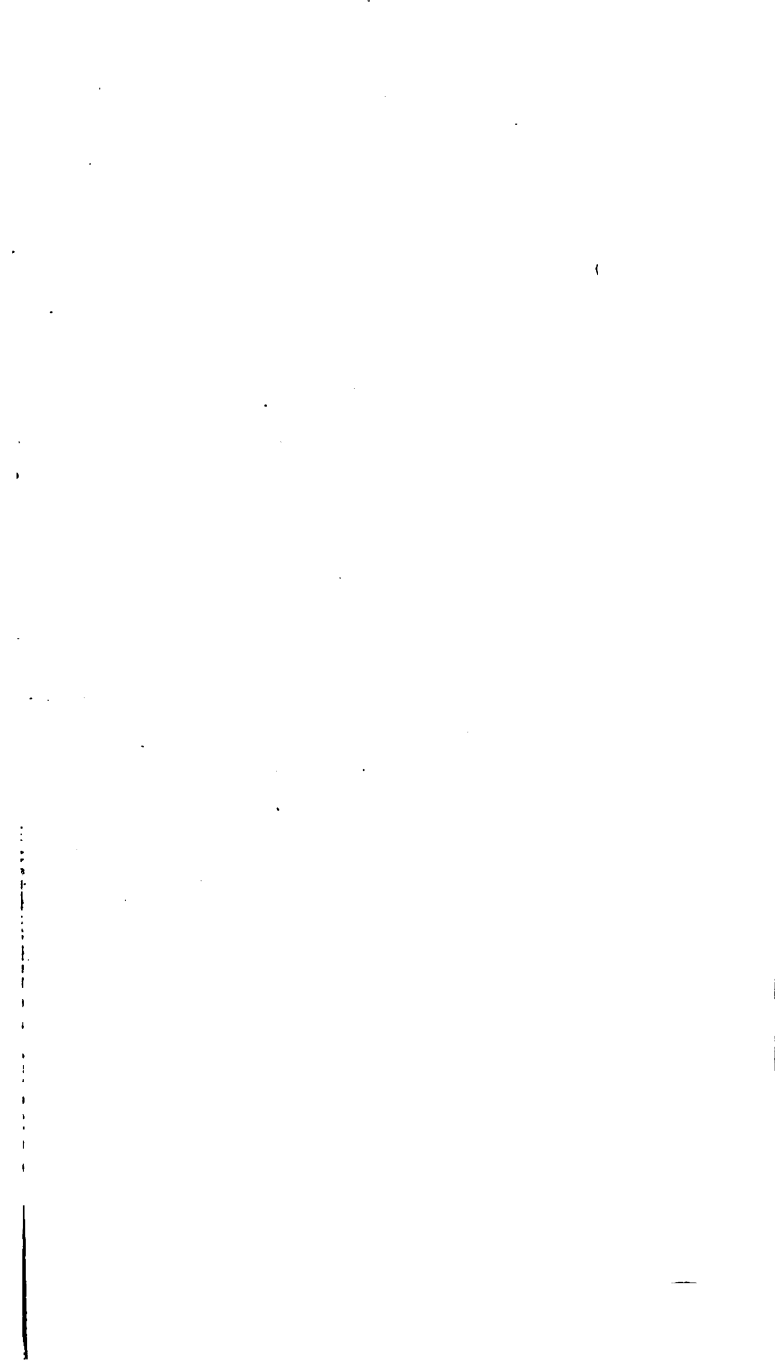
Acts xi. 24.\*

I close this memoir in Mr. Housman's own words. They are the last words of a sermon preached on the thirty-fifth anniversary of the publication of the Gospel within the chapel of St. Anne's. God grant that the earnest aspirations of its Founder may be fulfilled!

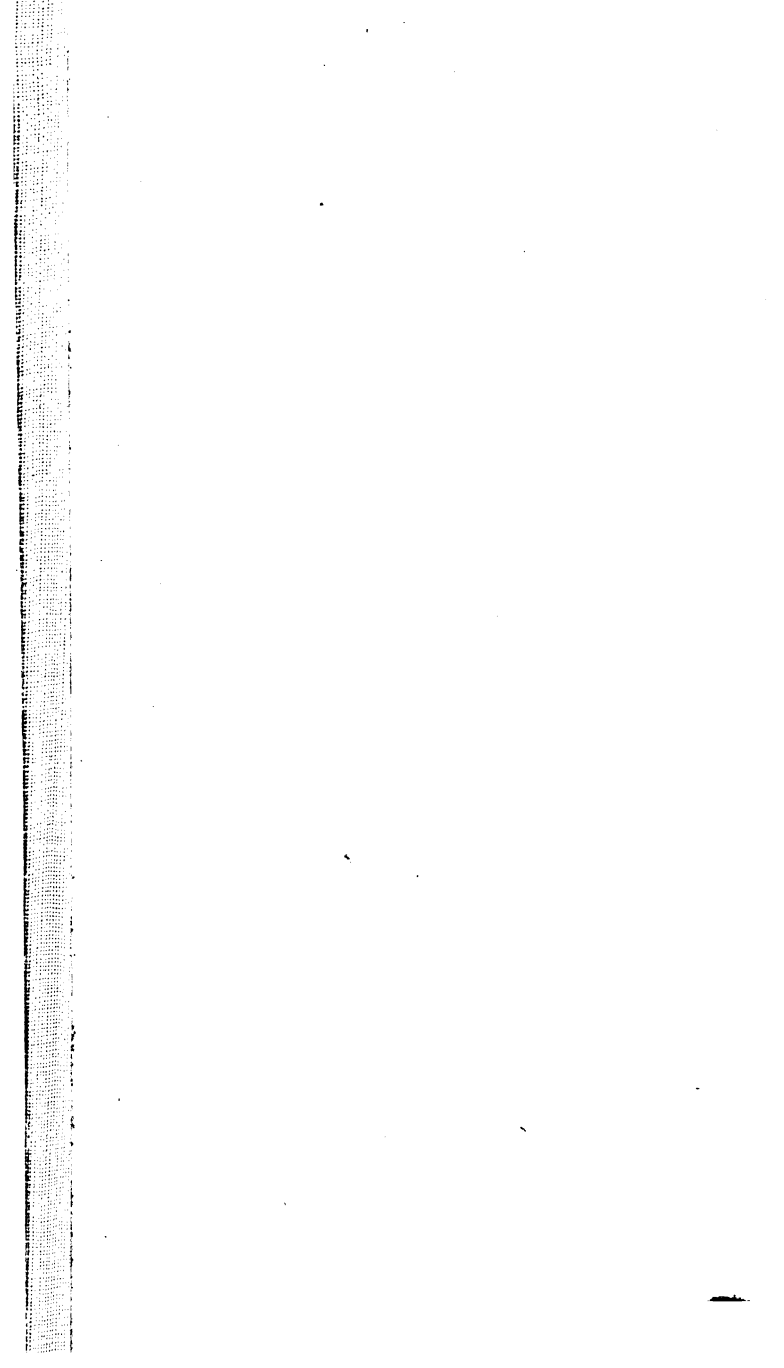
"Be instant, I beseech you, in prayer. Pray that the ministration of the word within these walls may be always humble, faithful, successful. Pray that the constant habit, the very motto, of your ministers, may be 'SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE.' From these words the first sermon in this house of God was preached; and if I knew which was to be the closing discourse, perhaps this would be the text, 'God forbid that I should glory, save in the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.' Brethren—beloved brethren—the time is pressing hard upon

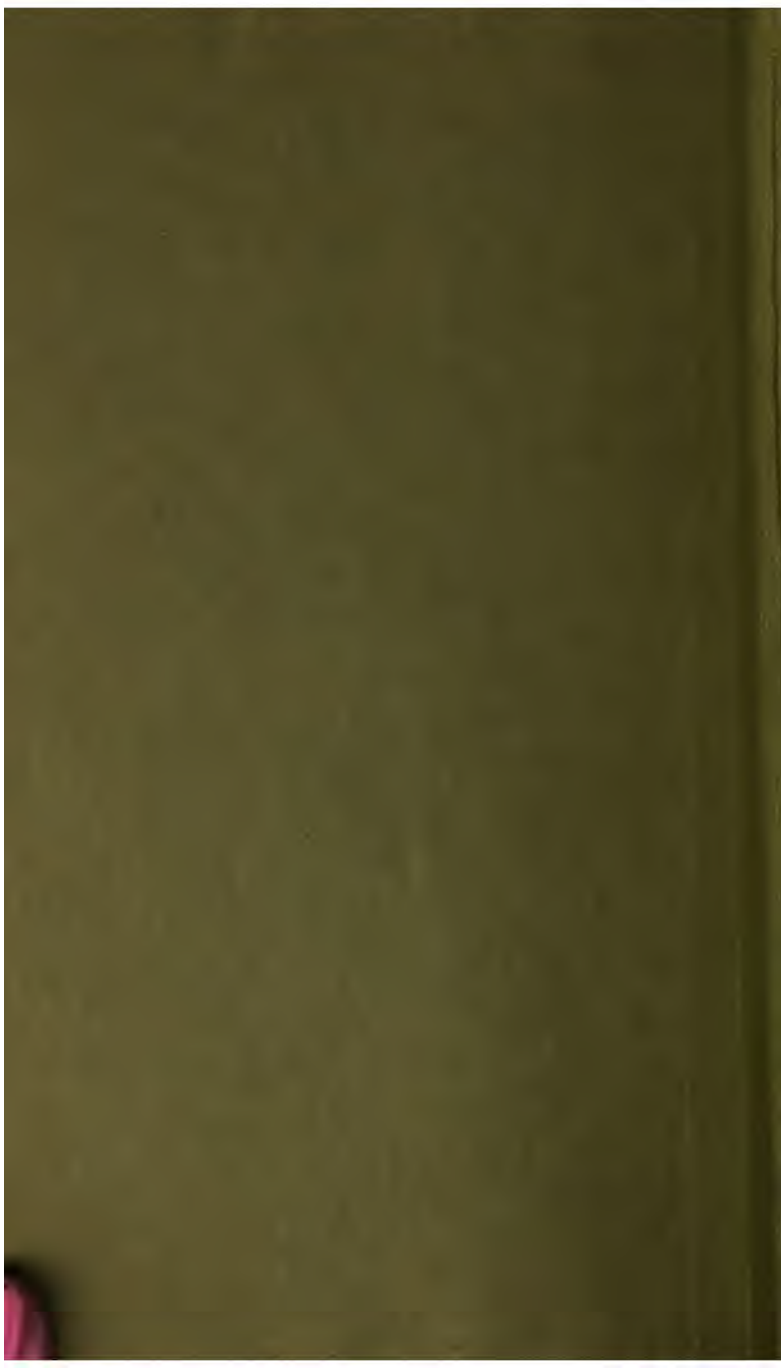
\* Shortly after the erection of this gratifying tribute of congregational esteem, Mr. Commissary Law, the son of the Bishop of Bath and Wells, directed the removal of the tablet to some other part of the edifice. The direction was complied with.

us, when the place which now knoweth us, will know us no more. But the voice of the Archangel, and the trump of God, will re-assemble us at the last day. We shall meet again in the presence of the Judge. May *you* be enabled to bear this testimony to the faithfulness of your ministers—‘They spake to us truly all the words of this life;’ and may your ministers be enabled thus to present the *whole* congregation to the Shepherd and Bishop of souls—‘Lo, these are the children whom thou hast given us!’ ”









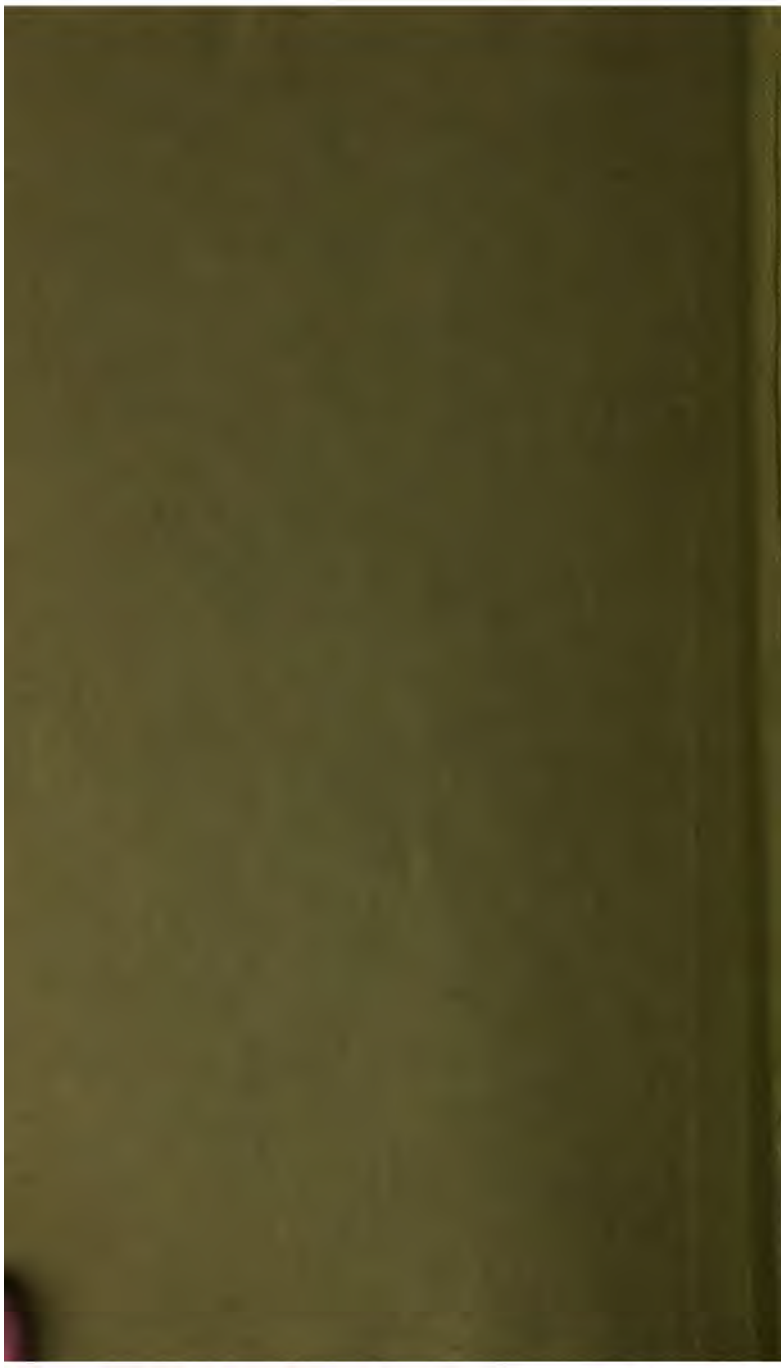


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